AN

ESSAY

ON THE

ORIGINAL GENIUS

OF

HOMER.

LONDON. MDCCLXIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE
READER.

HAVING, in my Preface to the Ruins of Palmyra, informed the Reader, that one of the objects of our Eaſtern voyages was to viſit the moſt celebrated ſcenes of antient ſtory, in order to compare their preſent appearance with the early claſſical ideas we had conceived of them; and, particularly that we propoſed to read the Iliad and Odyſſey in the countries where Achilles fought, where Ulyſſes travelled, and where Homer ſung; I conſidered myſelf as in ſome ſort accountable to the public and my friends for the reſult of this part of our ſcheme. I therefore determined to employ my firſt leiſure in throwing together ſuch obſervations as this inquiry had furniſhed, confining my firſt Eſſay of this kind to what concerns the Greek Poet.

But, however ambitious I was to engage in the Cauſe of Homer, the difficulties I found as to the manner of doing him juſtice, even where I clearly ſaw him miſrepreſented, greatly embarraſſed me as to the choice of a proper plan for ſuch an undertaking: For though our expectations from this object of our curioſity were by no means diſappointed, yet I almoſt deſpaired of a ſatisfactory method of conveying to others, in any tolerable degree, the entertainment we received from it on the ſpot. I muſt acknowledge, that thoſe difficulties may, with great juſtice, be charged to my own account, rather than to that of my ſubject, when it ſhall appear, that they aroſe leſs from a deficiency than an exuberance of matter, which ſtill continues to crowd upon my choice too abundantly, to admit of that contracted form, in which I think it prudent to make an experiment of public taſte, before I venture upon a work of more labour and extent. A review of Homer's ſcene of action leads naturally to the conſideration of the times when he lived; and the nearer we approach his country and age, the more we find him exquiſite in his pictures of nature, and that every ſpecies of his extenſive *Imitation* furniſhes the greateſt treaſure of original truth to be found in any Poet, antient or modern.

Deſirous, however, of giving ſome idea of what occurred to us, as travellers through thoſe countries where Homer had formed his conception of things, I tranſmitted ſome thoughts upon this head a few years ſince from Rome, to a friend [a], who, from his peculiar intereſt in the ſubject, his known reſpect for the public, and his approved tenderneſs for me, had a right to be conſulted upon ſuch an occaſion.

The ſketch, which I communicated to him in the form of a letter, was ſo fortunate as to meet with his approbation; but while, in compliance with his wiſhes, I was preparing it for the preſs, I had the honour of being called to a ſtation, which, for ſome years, fixed my whole attention upon objects of ſo very different a nature, that it became neceſſary to lay Homer aſide, and to reſerve the further conſideration of ſuch matters for times of more leiſure.

However, in the courſe of that active period, the duties of my ſituation engaged me in an occaſional attendance upon a Nobleman [b], who, though he preſided at his Majeſty's Councils, reſerved

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[a] Mr. Dawkins.

[b] The late Earl of Granville, a great admirer of Homer. Being directed to wait upon his Lordſhip, a few days before he died, with the Preliminary Articles of the Treaty of Paris, I found him ſo languid, that I propoſed poſtponing my buſineſs for another time: but he inſiſted that I ſhould ſtay, obſerving, that it could not prolong his life, to neglect his duty;

reſerved ſome moments for literary amuſement. His Lordſhip was ſo partial to this ſubject, that I ſeldom had the honour of receiving his commands on buſineſs, that he did not lead the converſation to Greece and Homer. He deſired to ſee the above-mentioned letter, and was pleaſed to approve my method of treating his favourite Poet. He ſtrongly recommended to me to publiſh the ſubſtance of that letter, changing the epiſtolary ſtyle and form into that of a more regular diſſertation, and extending the work, from materials of the ſame ſort (of which I laid a ſpecimen before him) into a more general commentary upon Homer.

I have now followed, though with diffidence, the firſt part of theſe inſtructions, upon the ſucceſs of which will depend my obedience to his Lordſh p's further commands; judging it not only reſpectful to thoſe for whom I write, but prudent with regard to myſelf, to truſt theſe extracts from my Eaſtern obſervations to the Reader's indulgence, in their preſent contracted and imperfect ſtate, before I venture further, even under the ſanction of his Lordſhip's reſpectable opinion. If the manner in which this Eſſay is received, encourages me to proceed, I ſhall, with more confidence, extend and methodiſe the work, upon the plan his Lordſhip propoſed; if not, there is already too much of it.

At preſent we ſhall confine our inquiry to Homer's *Mimetick Powers*; for, whether we conſider him as *Geographer*, *Traveller*, *Hiſtorian*, or *Chronologer*, whether his *Religion* and *Mythology*, *Manners* and *Cuſtoms*, or *Language* and *Learning*, are before us; in thoſe ſeveral views his *Imitation* is the object of our attention. We ſhall admit his antient title of *Philoſopher* only as he is a *Painter*[c]: Nor does it come within our plan to examine the Iliad and Odyſſey, except ſo far as their truth and originality, in this reſpect, are concerned.

His ſanguine admirers may perhaps alledge, as an objection to our undertaking, that of all poets he ſtands leaſt in need of this ſort of illuſtration; that the accuracy of his deſcriptions is too ſtriking to want any comment, which, while it explains, damps and extinguiſhes the true ſpirit and fire of his imagery; in ſhort, that his natural and unaffected manner carries with it thoſe obvious marks of Original Invention which diſcover (at firſt ſight, or not at all) not only that the picture has been taken from life, but that it has been faithfully taken.

But, admitting the juſtneſs of this encomium, in its utmoſt extent, it will ſurely be allowed that thoſe readers enter moſt into the ſpirit of the copy, who are beſt acquainted with

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and repeated the following paſſage, out of Sarpedon's ſpeech, with particular emphaſis on the third line, by which he alluded to the conſpicuous part he had acted in public life;

Ω πεπον, ει μεν γαρ πολεμον περι τονδε φυγοντες,
Αιει δη μελλοιμεν αγηρω τ' αθανατω τε
Εσσεσθ', ΟΥΤΕ ΚΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΣ ΕΝΙ ΠΡΩΤΟΙΣΙ ΜΑΧΟΙΜΕΝ,
Ουδε κε σε γελλοιμι μαχην ες κυδιανειραν·
Νυν δ', ιμπης γαρ κηρες εφεστασιν θαναλοιο
Μυριαι, ας ουκ εστι φυγειν βροτον, ουδ' υπαλυξαι,
Ιομεν· η τω ευχω αρεξομεν, η τις ημιν. Il. xii. 322.

Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,
Which claims no leſs the fearful than the brave,
For luſt of fame, *I ſhould not vainly dare*
In fighting fields, nor urge thy ſoul to war.
But ſince, alas! ignoble age muſt come,
Diſeaſe, and death's inexorable doom;
The life which others pay let us beſtow,
And give to Fame what we to Nature owe;
Brave tho' we fall, and honour'd if we live,
Or let us glory gain, or glory give! Pope's Hom. Il. xii. 387.

His Lordſhip then recovered ſpirits enough to hear the Treaty read, and to declare the warm approbation of a dying Stateſman (I uſe his own words) on the moſt glorious War, and moſt honourable Peace, this nation ever ſaw.

[c] See the diſtinction of the Eſſay at the end of page vi.

with the original. If, therefore, we would do the Poet juſtice, we ſhould approach, as near as poſſible, to the time and place when and where he wrote. This applies more properly to the Odyſſey; for, as that Poem is more deſcriptive of private and domeſtic life, ſo its beauties are more local, and its paintings are often of that finiſhed kind, which produce reſemblance and character out of the moſt trivial incidents. Theſe delicate touches, though eſſentially concerned in making out the likeneſs, are ſo minute as to eſcape obſervation, if the copy and original be not confronted.

May not this, in ſome degree, account for that ſuperiority which the Iliad has aſſumed over the Odyſſey for ſo many ages? a ſuperiority, which, if I am not miſtaken, muſt ſtill gain ground, in proportion to our diſtance from, and ignorance of, the times which the Poet deſcribes. For, ſuppoſing their merit equal, that Poem muſt longeſt ſurvive, which abounds moſt in the great tragic paſſions, and partakes leaſt of the fluctuating manners of common life. It may, perhaps, be alledged on the other hand, that, in [d] an early competition between the two Poems, the judgment of Antiquity was favourable to the Iliad. But I believe, that, whatever weight ſuch a preference ought to have, it can be traced no higher than Longinus, whoſe partiality for this Poem (which, by the by, is but ſlightly marked) ſeems founded, partly in his own genius, and, perhaps, a little in that of the age in which he lived, when the modes of life differ'd ſo much from thoſe of the Heroic times. It is not extraordinary, that a Critic, of his fire and imagination, ſhould prefer a pathetic drama to a moral ſtory, and kindle at pictures of paſſions, which he had often felt, though indifferent to a repreſentation of manners he never ſaw. But, after all, I cannot help thinking, that the Odyſſey, conſidered in its intereſting character, as a picture of life, muſt have been moſt generally reliſhed, by the age and country to which it was addreſſed; and that, if it has

[d] Madam Dacier, in her Preface to the Odyſſey, ſays, "Il eſt conſtant que le jugement de "l'Antiquité ſur ſes deux Poëmes eſt, que celui de l'Iliade eſt d'autant plus beau que celui "de l'Odyſſée, que la valeur d'Achille eſt ſuperieure à celle d'Ulyſſe; c'eſt ce que Platon "nous apprend dans le ſecond Hippias, où Socrate dit à Eudicus qu'il avoit ſouvent ouï "porter ce jugement à ſon pere Apemantus." I wiſh the Reader would turn to the paſſage, on which this confident appeal to the judgement of Antiquity is entirely founded; I am perſuaded, he will ſee, that Madam Dacier has been miſtaken in the ſingle inſtance which ſhe produces of an antient preference of the Iliad to the Odyſſey; and that this learned Lady has not ſufficiently attended, either to the grave irony, which is the character of this dialogue, or to the true conſtruction of the particular paſſage to which ſhe alludes. Socrates advances no opinion of his own here, nor does he ſeriouſly refer to the opinion of Apemantus; but, for argument's ſake, he ſlyly ſuggeſts a topic, which he knows will engage the Sophiſt's vanity, and takes occaſion thence to exhibit a ſort of humorous caricatura of the pedantic preſumption, bad taſte, and abſurd reaſoning, of that ſet of men. Nor is the *Valour* of Achilles, which M. Dacier's unfaithful tranſlation introduces here, at all under conſideration, in this ridiculous diſpute. The word αμεινων, which, in its early ſignification, ſo frequently alluded to mere ſtrength and courage, might indeed have been equivocal, had not all ambiguity been removed, by a thorough explanation, in the ſubſequent part of the Dialogue, where Socrates aſks Hippias, which of the two, Achilles or Ulyſſes, he preferred? and in what the one excels the other? ποτερον αμεινων; και κατα τι; Hippias anſwers the firſt queſtion by ſaying, that he thinks Achilles the beſt (αριστον) of the Grecians; and the ſecond, by obſerving, that he excels as much in *plainneſs* and *truth*, as Ulyſſes does in *duplicity* and *falſhood*. The veracity of the Heroes of the Iliad and Odyſſey being thus ludicrouſly laid down as the teſt of their merit (in which that of the two Poems is abſurdly involved), Socrates proceeds to demonſtrate, with much ironical ſophiſtry, that Achilles has no claim of preference under this title. In ſhort, if any concluſion can be drawn from this Dialogue, with regard to the judgement of Antiquity, upon the merit of thoſe two Poems, it will be unfavourable to M. Dacier's opinion; and can only amount to this, that the dogmatical preſumption of the Sophiſts (who had arrogantly aſſumed a right of deciſion in every province of Literature), is expoſed, on this occaſion, by Plato, for preferring the Iliad to the Odyſſey, upon principles of Criticiſm, equally void of taſte and reaſon. It may be alſo obſerved, that Ariſtotle, Horace, and Quintilian, the great profeſſed Critics of Antiquity, make no ſuch diſtinction; nor does Virgil (the beſt of all Critics on Homer and his moſt diſtinguiſhing admirer) diſcover any partiality of this kind.

has contributed leſs to the Author's fame in later times, it is becauſe the peculiar preciſion and cloſeneſs of its minute repreſentation, as well in cuſtoms and manners, as in landſcape, muſt find fewer modern judges, in proportion to our ignorance of the private characters, familiar occurrences, and domeſtick ſcenery of the heroic ages; while the Iliad, addreſſing itſelf more univerſally to the paſſions, in animated pictures of human nature, appeals more forcibly to thoſe feelings, which are common to every age and country.

I own I am a little ſurpriſed that there ſhould ſtill be ſo large a field open for obſervation of this kind; and, particularly, that thoſe Greek and Roman Writers who affected to diſcover ſo perfect a ſyſtem of Morals and Politicks in Homer, ſhould have beſtowed ſo little conſideration upon the character of the times for which all this inſtruction was calculated; for, though the Poet's age and that of his firſt great Critick have never been properly diſtinguiſhed by any author I have yet met with, I will venture to ſay, that they differed as much with regard to their ſtate of Police and degree of Civilization, their modes and taſtes, in ſhort, the great buſineſs and leading pleaſures of life, as we do in the ſame reſpect, from our Gothic anceſtors in the days of Chivalry and Romance.

I believe the truth is, that Homer's deep Ethic Plan has been carried much further than he intended: His great merit, as an inſtructor of mankind, ſeems to be that of having tranſmitted to us a moſt faithful tranſcript, or (which is, perhaps, more uſeful) a correct abſtract of Human Nature, impartially exhibited under the circumſtances which belonged to his period of ſociety, as far as his experience and obſervation went. Nor do I for that reaſon think leſs reſpectfully of the important moral leſſons which are to be collected from the Iliad, and ſtill more from the Odyſſey; for Elegant Imitation has ſtrange Powers of intereſting us in certain Views of Nature, which we conſider but tranſiently till the Poet or Painter awake our attention, and ſend us back to *life* with a new Curioſity, which we owe entirely to the *Copy*; beſides, a collection of thoſe pleaſing and inſtructive ſketches of Life and Manners, brought judiciouſly together, if the artiſt is happy in the choice, the arrangement, and, above all, the truth of his characters, has this advantage over Real Life, that they are capable of that deliberate examination and cautious compariſon with one another, which the fleeting and diſperſed Originals will not ſo conveniently admit.

Should the fate of the experiment I am now making, convince me of a common error, which I have too much reaſon to dread, viz. that of miſtaking a fondneſs of my ſubject for a knowledge of it, I again promiſe to ſtand corrected, and to ſpare at leaſt the Public, if not myſelf, any further trouble on this head; hoping that my partiality to thoſe romantic ſcenes of heroic action will meet with ſome indulgence, eſpecially from thoſe, who can imagine, and forgive, that ſpecies of enthuſiaſm which belongs to ſuch a journey, performed in ſuch ſociety, where Homer being my guide, and Bouverie and Dawkins my fellow travellers, the beauties of the firſt of Poets were enjoyed in the company of the beſt of friends. However wild and unreaſonable thoſe feelings may appear to judgements of a more ſober caſt, I muſt ſtill acknowledge a return of their influence, whenever I indulge in a grateful review of the days which we paſſed together, examining the Iliad on the Scamandrian plain, and tracing Ulyſſes, Menelaus, and Telemachus, through the various ſcenes of their entertaining Adventures, with the Odyſſey in our hands.

Had I been ſo fortunate as to have enjoyed their aſſiſtance, in arranging and preparing for the Public, the ſubſtance of our many friendly converſations on this ſubject, I ſhould be leſs anxious about the fate of the following work: But whatever my ſucceſs may be in an attempt to contribute to the amuſement of a vacant hour, I am happy to think, that though I ſhould fail to anſwer the expectations of public curioſity, I am ſure to ſatisfy the demands of private friendſhip; and that, acting as the only ſurvivor and truſtee for the literary concerns of my late fellow-travellers, I am, to the beſt of my judgement, carrying into execution the Purpoſe of men for whoſe memory I ſhall ever have great veneration; and though I may do injuſtice to thoſe honeſt feelings which urge me to this pious taſk, by mixing an air of compliment in an act of duty, yet I muſt not diſown a private, perhaps an idle conſolation, which, if it be vanity to indulge, it would be ingratitude to ſuppreſs, viz. that as long as my imperfect deſcriptions ſhall preſerve from oblivion the preſent ſtate of the Troade, and the remains of Balbeck and Palmyra, ſo long will it be known that Dawkins and Bouverie were my friends.

AN ESSAY ON THE ORIGINAL GENIUS OF HOMER.

THOUGH the account we have thought it proper to give the reader of that particular object of our eaſtern tour, which furniſhed the ſubject of this eſſay, may not have entirely reconciled the reader to our views; yet, I hope, the following fragment of ancient hiſtory will ſoften the imputation of whim and ſingularity, to which, I fear, our undertaking may, in ſome meaſure, be expoſed, as it will, at leaſt, ſhew, that we were not the firſt who thought of going to Troy to read Homer.

When Eſchines the orator was baniſhed from Athens, by his victorious rival in eloquence, we find that one of the amuſements of his exile was an excurſion from Rhodes, to viſit the plains of Troy, with the Iliad in his hand, accompanied by his friend Cymon. We alſo learn, that a very romantic piece of gallantry, in which his fellow-traveller was raſhly engaged on the banks of Scamander, in violation of the laws both of decency and hoſpitality, interrupted the execution of this ſcheme. The reader, who wiſhes to ſee this tale prettily embelliſhed, muſt look for it in Fontaine; in the mean time, I ſhall refer him to the annexed note [a] for this curious anecdote, and the authority upon which it is founded.

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[a] Without vouching for the authenticity of thoſe letters of Eſchines, from which this ſtory is taken, I ſhall give from them the following abſtract of it.

It was an annual cuſtom at Troy, that the girls, who were to be married that year, ſhould, on a certain day, bathe in the Scamander, and conſecrate their virginity to the god of that river. Eſchines and Cymon were admitted, as ſtrangers, to ſee this ceremony, at a proper diſtance, with the relations of the girls. When Caluboe, a beautiful young lady of a good family, went into the river, and pronounced the words uſed on that occaſion, Cymon, who had dreſſed himſelf like a river-god, and lay in ambuſcade for that purpoſe, anſwered, "The "god Scamander receives your preſent, and prefers you to all your companions," and retired with her among the buſhes. A few days after, when the new-married couples aſſiſted at the feſtival of Venus, the travellers attended upon that occaſion; and Caluboe diſcovering Cymon, innocently pointed him out to her friend as the god Scamander, to whom ſhe had conſecrated her virginity. The affair was by this means diſcovered, and the travellers were obliged to make their eſcape.

The indiſcreet adventure which prevented the Athenian Orator from accompliſhing the object of his voyage, has, perhaps, deprived us of a valuable piece of criticiſm on the Iliad, while it has furniſhed us with a hint towards accounting *very naturally* for the many river-gods we find in the genealogies of the heroic age. However, his unſucceſsful attempt ſtill ſuggeſts this obſervation in our favour, viz. that about the moſt refined period of Greek letters, when Homer was beſt underſtood, and moſt reliſhed, an Athenian of diſtinguiſhed taſte, and much the Poet's admirer, had formed ſuch expectations from reading the Iliad on the Scamandrian plain, that he undertook a voyage to Troy expreſsly with that view.

But whatever the object of our plan was, the Reader is only intereſted in the fruits it may have produced; and of this he will be beſt enabled to form his own judgement, by comparing our Survey of the Troade, with the account which he finds of it in the Iliad; if at the ſame time he will take the pains of extracting, from that Poem, a mere journal of the ſiege of Troy, ſtripped of all poetical embelliſhments, I think he will find, that, notwithſtanding the great ſhare which fancy has had in the compoſition, it contains, in general, a conſiſtent narrative of military events, connected and ſupported by that due coincidence of the circumſtances of time and place, which Hiſtory requires.

But as his accuracy is, by no means, confined to this ſpot, I beg leave, before we come to the examination of our map of Troy, to take a ſhort view of that general exactneſs which runs through his deſcriptions of every kind. If, upon the whole, the obſervations which I ſhall offer on this head are admitted to have any weight, I think they will ſupport this general concluſion; viz. That however queſtionable Homer's ſuperiority may be, in other reſpects, as a perfect model and ſtandard for compoſition, in the great province of *Imitation* he is the moſt *original* of all Poets, and the moſt *conſtant and faithful copier after Nature.*

As I was confirmed in this judgment, by referring myſelf back to the ſtate of ſociety and manners of that early period, and by examining the materials of the Iliad and Odyſſey, not only where they were collected, but, as nearly as poſſible, in the ſame order, in the ſame light, and under the ſame point of view, that I imagine they preſented themſelves to the Poet's choice; ſo the object of this enquiry is to inveſtigate the ſeveral circumſtances and various relations of this kind, which could, in any degree, influence his general conception of things.

Though, from what has been already ſaid, the reader will not expect ſtrict regularity in this ſpecimen, yet, for the ſake of ſome method, it may not be amiſs to lay before him the general order, which I propoſe to obſerve in treating this ſubject.

I ſhall begin, by offering a few conjectures with regard to HOMER'S COUNTRY.—I ſhall next take into conſideration his TRAVELS.—Theſe I ſhall chiefly deduce from his NAVIGATION and GEOGRAPHY; the firſt of which will lead us to ſome obſervations on his WINDS, as the ſecond will introduce a ſhort review of that part of Mr. POPE'S TRANSLATION, which relates to this matter: and both theſe articles will give me an opportunity of vindicating the Poet from ſome unmerited Imputations of Inaccuracy.—I ſhall alſo enter into a curſory examination of his RELIGION, MYTHOLOGY, MANNERS, and CUSTOMS; and, having conſidered him as an *Hiſtorian* and *Chronologer*, ſhall take a ſhort view of his LANGUAGE and LEARNING —I ſhall conclude with his pretenſions as a PHILOSOPHER; confining myſelf however, in what I ſhall offer, under thoſe different heads, to what is connected with my ſubject, and may ſerve to throw light upon his ORIGINAL GENIUS.

HOMER'S

HOMER'S COUNTRY.

THE imperfect information which hiſtory furniſhes, with regard to that old ſubject of controverſy, *the Place of Homer's Birth and Education*, though it coincides, in a great meaſure, with our opinion on that head, is not ſo much the object of this inquiry, as it is to learn, if poſſible, from the Poet *himſelf*, where his fancy began to open to the immenſe field of matter, which he ſo happily collected and arranged in that wonderful epic form, that ſtill continues to hold the firſt rank among compoſitions of genius. What occurs to me, in favour of the moſt generally received opinion, that he was an *Aſiatic*, probably an *Ionian* or *Æolian* [a], and perhaps of *Chios* or *Smyrna*, is as follows.

If we ſurvey his Map of the world with attention, I think we may diſcover, that his firſt impreſſions of the external face of Nature were made in a country eaſt of Greece, at leaſt as far as we may be allowed to form a judgment from his deſcribing ſome places under a perſpective, to which ſuch a point of view is abſolutely neceſſary.

The firſt inſtance I ſhall offer, in ſupport of this opinion, is his placing the Locrians *beyond* Eubœa; a piece of geography, which, though very intelligible at Smyrna or Chios, would appear ſtrange to the inhabitants of Athens or Argos.

His deſcription of the ſituation of the Echinades, *beyond Sea, oppoſite to Elis* [b], has ſomething equivocal in it, which is cleared up, if we ſuppoſe it addreſſed to the Inhabitants of the Aſiatick ſide of the Archipelago; but if, with Mr. Pope [c], we underſtand the words *beyond Sea* to relate to Elis, I think we adopt an unnatural Conſtruction to come at a forced meaning; for the old Greek Hiſtorians tell us, that thoſe Iſlands are ſo cloſe upon the Coaſt of Elis, that in their time many of them had been joined to it by means of the Achelous, which ſtill continues to connect them with the Continent, by the rubbiſh which that river depoſits at its mouth, as I have had an opportunity of obſerving.

I think I can diſcover another inſtance of this kind in the fifteenth Book of the Odyſſey, where Eumæus, the faithful ſervant of Ulyſſes, is deſcribed, entertaining his diſguiſed maſter with a recital of the adventures of his youth; he opens his ſtory with a deſcription of the iſland of Syros, his native land, and places it *beyond* or *above* Ortygia.

Now, if we conſider that Ithaca was the ſcene of this conference between Ulyſſes and Eumæus, it will appear, that the ſituation of Syros is very inaccurately laid down; for, in reality, this iſland, ſo far from being placed *beyond*, or *farther from Ithaca* than Ortygia is, ſhould have been deſcribed as nearer to it.

But, as the ſame deſcription would have been perfectly agreeable to truth, had it been made in Ionia, is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the Poet had received his early impreſſions of the Situation of Syros in that part of the world, and had upon this occaſion forgot to adapt his ideas to the ſpot to which the ſcene is ſhifted?

If my conjecture is thus far admitted, I beg leave to proceed to a further uſe of it, in attempting to throw ſome light on this obſcure expreſſion, ὀθι τροπαὶ ἠελίοιο. It is highly important to the Poet to have his own ſenſe of thoſe words reſtored, if poſſible, for they have been urged

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[a] When we conſider in how narrow a compaſs thoſe contiguous Countries lie, I believe we ſhall think it a little too nice to determine that Homer belonged to the latter upon the authority of his language, and ſome cuſtoms which appear Æolian.

[b] Πέρην ἁλὸς Ἠλιάδος αἴης. Il. ii. 626.

[c] "And thoſe who view fair Elis o'er the Seas
"From the bleſt Iſlands of th' Echinades," Il. ii. 759.

Madam Dacier has adopted the Conſtruction for which I contend without the leaſt idea of applying it to the purpoſe for which I quote the paſſage. Her words are, "ceux de Dulichium et des "autres Echinades, de ces Iſles ſacrées qui ſont à *l'extremité de la mer vis à vis de la cote d'Eliſte.*"

urged as an argument of his groſs ignorance of Geography, by thoſe who think they relate to the latitude of Syros, and that this deſcription places that iſland under the Tropic.

Without entering into that labyrinth [d] of learning, with which the critics on both ſides have ſo much embarraſſed this paſſage, that it is hard to ſay, whether Homer has ſuffered moſt

[d] Mr. Pope and Madam Dacier's notes on this paſſage, will point out to thoſe who have further curioſity on this head, the different explanations which have been given of it.

Od. xv. 440. " *There curious Eyes inſcrib'd with wonder trace*
" *The Sun's diurnal, and his annual race.*

" The words in *Homer* (ſays Mr. Pope) are τροπαι ηελιοιο, or *ſolis converſiones*. M. *Perrault* inſults the " Poet as ignorant of Geography, for placing *Syros* under the *Tropick*; an error (ſays he) which " Commentators in vain have labour'd to defend, by having recourſe to a Sun-dial of *Pherecydes*, " on which the motions of the Sun (the τροπαι ηελιοιο) were deſign'd. The laſt defence would " indeed be ridiculous, ſince *Pherecydes* flouriſh'd three hundred years after the time of *Homer*: " No one (replies Monſieur *Boileau*) was ever at any difficulty about the ſenſe of this paſſage; " *Euſtathius* proves that τριπεσθαι ſignifies the ſame as δυνειν, and denotes the ſetting of the Sun; " ſo that the words mean, that *Syros* is ſituate above *Ortygia*, on that ſide where the Sun ſets, " or weſterly, προς τα δυνικα μερη της Ορτυγιας. 'Tis true, *Euſtathius* mentions a bower, Σπηλαιον, " in which the converſions of the Sun were figur'd. This indeed would fully vindicate *Ho-* " *mer*; but *Bochart* and others affirm, that *Euſtathius* is in an error; and that *Syros* is ſo far " from lying to the weſt, or προς τροπας ηελιοιο, that it bears an eaſtern poſition both with " reſpect to *Ithaca* and *Delos*: How is this objection to be anſwered? *Bochart*, *p.* 411. of his " *Geogpaphia ſacra*, explains it by having recourſe to the bower mention'd by *Euſtathius*, in " which the motions of the Sun were drawn. *Pherecydes* (ſays *Heſychius Mileſius*) having col- " lected the writings of the *Phœnicians*, from the uſe of them alone, without any inſtructor, " became famous in the world by the ſtrength of his own genius: And *Laertius* writes, that " an *Heliotrope* made by him was preſerv'd in the Iſland of *Syros*. Thus it is evident, that he " borrow'd his knowledge from the *Phœnicians*, and probably his ſkill in Aſtronomy, they " being very expert in that ſcience, by reaſon of its uſe in their navigation. Why then " might there not be a machine which exhibited the motion of the Sun, made by the *Phœ-* " *nicians*, and why might not *Homer* be acquainted with it? It is probable that *Pherecydes* " took his pattern from this *Heliotrope*, which, being one of the greateſt rarities of antiquity, " might give a great reputation to *Syros*, and conſequently was worthy to be celebrated by " *Homer*, the great preſerver of Antiquities. *Fallitur igitur* (ſays *Bochart*) *Euſtathius, cum* " *vult intelligi, quaſi ſita ſit Syrus ad occiduas partes Deli; cum contra Deli ad ortum ſit Syrus non* " *ad occaſum; & rem ſic ſe habere ex ipſo Homero patet, apud quem Eumæus in Ithacâ, Syriam* " *aſſerit eſſe trans Delum, quo nihil dici potuit falſius, ſi Syrus ſit ad occaſum Deli.* If this anſwer " appears to any perſon too ſtudied and abſtruſe, the difficulty may be ſolv'd, by ſuppoſing " *Eumæus* ſpeaking of *Delos* as it lay with reſpect to *Syrus*, before he was carried from it; for " inſtance, if *Syrus* lies on the eaſt of *Delos* to a man in *Ithaca*, both *Ithaca* and *Delos* will " lie on the weſt of *Syrus* to one of that Iſland. I would therefore imagine that *Eumæus* ſpeaks " as a native of *Syros*, and not as a ſojourner in *Ithaca*, and then *Delos* will lie towards the " ſun-ſetting, or προς ηλιου τροπας. But this laſt I only propoſe as a conjecture, not preſuming " to offer it as a deciſion." So far Mr. Pope. — Madam Dacier obſerves as follows;

" Voici un paſſage très-important. M. Deſpreaux, dans ſes *Reflexions ſur* LONGIN, a fort " bien refuté la ridicule Critique que l'Auteur du Parallele, homme qui étoit très ignorant en " Grec, en Latin, & ſur-tout en Geographie, avoit faite contre Homere, c'eſt-à-dire, contre " le pere de la Geographie, en l'acculant d'être tombé dans la plus énorme bevûë qu'un Poëte " ait jamais faite: C'eſt, dit-il, *d'avoir mis l'Iſle de Syros & la Mer Mediterranée ſous le Tropique*; " *bevûe*, ajoute-t-il, *que les Interprêtes d'Homere ont tâché en vain de ſauver, en expliquant ce paſ-* " *ſage du Cadran que le Philoſophe Pherecyde, qui vivoit trois cens ans après Homere, avoit fait dans* " *cette Iſle.* Il n'y a rien-là qui ne marque l'ignorance groſſiere de cet Auteur, car il eſt " également faux & qu'Homere ait placé l'Iſle de Syros ſous le Tropique, & qu'on ait jamais " voulu juſtifier ce Poëte, en expliquant ce paſſage du Cadan de Pherecyde qui ne fut fait que " trois cens ans après. Mais je ſuis fâchée que M. Deſpreaux, qui réfute cette malheureuſe " Critique avec tant de raiſon & de ſolidité, ne ſoit pas m eux entré lui même dans le véri- " table ſens de ce paſſage, & qu'il ſe ſoit laiſſé tromper par une note d'Euſtathe, qui lui a

" perſuadé

moſt by his ignorant enemies, or his officious friends; I beg to carry the reader, for a moment, to the Aſiatic ſide of the Archipelago, in order to examine, whether Syros, when viewed from that ſhore, offers any appearances, to which thoſe words can be naturally applied, and without violence to their literal meaning.

And here I muſt obſerve, that no part of our tour afforded more pleaſure and entertainment, than the claſſical ſea-proſpects from this coaſt. The more extended views bounded by Athos, Olympus, and other mountains of Macedonia, Thrace, or Theſſaly, ſome of which, in that clear atmoſphere, I could perfectly diſtinguiſh, with my naked eye, from the top of Ida, on the oppoſite ſide of the Ægean ſea when the day was favourable. The more confined evening landſcape, from a leſs elevated ſtation, is not leſs pleaſing; for it is remarkable, that the fertility and cultivation of the Iſlands near the Aſiatic ſhore, is almoſt entirely confined to the ſide that looks towards the Continent, from which they are, for that reaſon, ſeen to the greateſt advantage. The weſtern horizon, when lit up, by the ſummer's ſun going down behind this cluſter of iſlands, gives the moſt beautiful variegated terminations imaginable.

In

" perſuadé que ces mots οθι τροπαι ηελιοιο, veulent dire que *l'Iſle de Syros eſt au Couchant de Delos*; " car c'eſt ainſi qu'Euſtathe l'a d'abord expliqué, κειμενη προς τροπας ηλιου, ηγουν προς τα δυικα μερη " της Ορτυγιας, &c. *C'eſt-à-dire, que Syros eſt ſituée au Couchant du Soleil, au Couchant de l'Iſle* " *d'Ortygie*; *Car* τριπεσθαι, ſe tourner, *ſe dit du Soleil pour* δυνειν, ſe coucher. M. Deſpreaux de- " voit voir que cette explication eſt inſoutenable, car il eſt abſolument faux que l'Iſle de Syros " ſoit au Couchant de Delos. Aucun Geographe ne l'a jamais dit. Et comment Homere auroit- " il pû le dire dans le même vers où il a dit Ορτυγιας καθυπερθεν, *au deſſus* de l'Iſle *d'Ortygie*; ce " qui eſt *au deſſus* ou *au-de-là*, de cette Iſle par rapport à Eumée qui eſt à Ithaque, ne peut jamais " être au Couchant. Voici comme en parle le ſavant Bochart dans ſa Chanaan, Liv. I. Chap. xiv. " *Euſtathe ſe trompe quand il veut que par* ηλιου τροπας, *on entende le Couchant, comme ſi l'Iſle de Sy-* " *ros étoit au Couchant de Delos, car au contraire elle eſt au Levant & non au Couchant de cette* " *Iſle. C'eſt la ſituation que lui donnent les Geographes, & il ne faut que ce vers d'Homere pour prou-* " *ver que c'eſt ſa veritable poſition, puiſqu' Eumée, qui eſt à Ithaque, aſſeure que Syros eſt au-deſſus,* " *au de là d'Ortygie, ce qui ſeroit très-faux ſi elle étoit au Couchant de Delos, Eumée auroit plûtôt* " *dû dire en deçà.* Il falloit donc s'en tenir à la ſeconde explication qu'Euſtathe a ajoutée dans ſa " même Remarque, *D'autres*, dit-il, *expliquent ce paſſage en diſant que dans l'Iſle de Syros il y avoit* " *un autre qui marquoit les converſions du Soleil*, c'eſt-à-dire les Solſtices, *& qu'on appelloit l'autre* " *du Soleil par cette raiſon. Et voilà ce qu'Homere entend par ces mots, où ſont les converſions du So-* " *leil.* Voilà la ſeule veritable explication; elle merite d'être eclaircie. Nous voyons par ce " paſſage même que les Pheniciens avoient fait un long ſejour dans l'Iſle de Syros, il eſt certain " que le nom même de *Syros* vient des Pheniciens, comme nous le verrons plus bas, & nous ſa- " vons d'ailleurs que les Pheniciens étoient très-ſavans en Aſtronomie, c'eſt de-là qu'il faut tirer " l'explication de τροπαι ηελιοιο, & il eſt aiſé de voir que c'eſt ηλιοτροπιον, *l'heliotrope*, c'eſt-a-dire le " *Cadran*, & par-là Homere nous apprend que les Pheniciens avoient fait dans cette Iſle un Ca- " dran dont le ſtyle ou l'aiguille, par le moyen de ſon ombre, marquoit les Solſtices. Et comme " c'étoit une choſe fort rare & fort merveilleuſe dans ces temps-là, Homere, fort curieux & fort " inſtruit de tous ces points d'Antiquité, la marque comme une rareté qui diſtinguoit cette Iſle. " Bientôt après les Cadrans furent plus communs. Environ ſix vingts ans après Homere, l'Ecri- " ture ſainte fait mention, 4 *Rois*. xx. 2. d'un Cadran qui étoit à Jeruſalem, & qu'on appelloit le " *Cadran d'Achas*, ſur lequel Dieu fit, en faveur de ce Prince, que l'ombre retrograda de dix " degrez. Ce Cadran marquoit les heures, & non les Solſtices. Il y avoit donc des Cadrans avant " celui de Pherecyde, qui ne fit le ſien à Syros que deux cens ans après celui d'Achas, & trois " cens ans après celui des Pheniciens, & par conſequent, pour expliquer ce paſſage d'Homere, on " n'a eu recours qu'à ce Cadran des Pheniciens & nullement à celui de Pherecyde qu'Homere n'a " jamais connu. Il me ſemble que cela eſt prouvé. Mais il y a plus encore, c'eſt qu'il y a bien " de l'apparence que ce Cadran, que Pherecyde fit à Syros trois cens ans après Homere, ne " fut fait que ſur les découvertes des Pheniciens, car Heſychius de Milet, dans le Livre qu'il a " fait de ceux qui ont été celebres par leur érudition, nous aſſeure que *Pherecyde, qui étoit de Sy-* " *ros même, n'eut point de maître, & qu'il ſe rendit habile en étudiant quelques Livres ſecretes des* " *Pheniciens qu'il avoit recouvrez.* Je me flate que ce paſſage d'Homere eſt aſſez éclairci, & c'eſt " par le ſecours que M. Dacier m'a donné."

In the infancy of Aſtronomy, the diſtinct varieties of this broken outline would naturally ſuggeſt the Idea of a ſort of rude ecliptic to the inhabitants of this coaſt, marking the annual northern and ſouthern progreſs of the ſun, which, at the ſummer-ſolſtice, would appear to thoſe who live in certain parts of Ionia, to ſet behind the Iſland of Syros. If, then, we ſuppoſe this appearance to have been familiar to Homer and his countrymen, the obſcurity of the paſſage is cleared up by this Ionian point of view, and the words, taken literally, offer an obvious and natural meaning.

In purſuance of the ſame method of illuſtrating Homer's Writings and his Country from each other, I ſhall draw ſome conjectures with regard to the place of his birth, or at leaſt of his education, from his *ſimiles*; here we may expect the moſt ſatisfactory evidence that an enquiry of this obſcure nature will admit; for it is from thoſe natural and unguarded appeals of original genius, to the obvious and familiar occurrences of common life, that we may not only frequently collect the cuſtom, manners, and arts of remote antiquity, but ſometimes diſcover the Condition, and, I think, in the following inſtances, the Country of the Poet.

I ſhall begin with that beautiful compariſon [e] of the wavering and irreſolute perplexity of the Greeks, to an agitated ſea; and take this paſſage into conſideration the more willingly, as it has given occaſion to ſome ſevere ſtrictures on the Poet's Geography.

This is not only one of the happieſt alluſions, but, if I am not miſtaken, one of the moſt beautiful ſea-pieces in Homer; but, if we could do juſtice to his *perſpective*, we muſt place ourſelves on the ſpot, or in the *point of view* where he made his *drawing*, which will only anſwer to ſome part of the Aſiatic coaſt, or its iſlands.

It would be a falſe and affected refinement to ſuppoſe, that the ſimile acquires any additional beauty by the diſcovery of a real landſcape in thoſe lines; the Poet's purpoſe, which was to paint the ſtruggle of *wavering* indeciſion, diſtracted between a ſenſe of *honour* and of *danger*, and alternately reſolving to *fly* or to *ſtay*, is, no doubt, completely ſatisfied in the general image which he makes uſe of; but though his meaning went no farther, I am not leſs of opinion, that, upon this occaſion, his imagination ſuggeſted to him a ſtorm which he had actually ſeen; and having myſelf had more than once an opportunity of obſerving, from the coaſt of Ionia, the truth of this picture, in every circumſtance, I cannot help giving it as an inſtance of the Poet's conſtant original manner of compoſition, which faithfully (though in this caſe inadvertently) recalls the images that a particular ſtriking appearance of nature had ſtrongly impreſſed upon his youthful fancy, retaining the ſame local aſſociations which accompanied his firſt warm conception of them.

But leſt my teſtimony, as an eye-witneſs of the exact correſpondence of this copy to the original, from which I ſuppoſe it taken, ſhould not be ſatisfactory, I would propoſe a teſt of this matter, upon which every reader will be enabled to form his own judgment. Suppoſe a painter to undertake to copy this piece from Homer, he will find each object, not only clearly expreſſed, though within the compaſs of four hexameters, but its particular place on the canvas diſtinctly marked, and the diſpoſition, as well as perſpective, of the whole aſcertained, with a preciſion of out-line from which it is impoſſible to depart; the Thracian mountains muſt form the back ground, thence the tempeſt is to burſt on the Ægean ſea, which, by the by, has its proper ſtormy colouring; while

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[e] Ὡς δ' ανεμοι δυο ποντον ορινθιον ιχθυοεντα,
ΒΟΡΕΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΖΕΦΥΡΟΣ, ΤΩ ΤΕ ΘΡΗΚΗΘΕΝ ΑΗΤΟΝ,
Ελθοντ' εξαπινης· αμυδις δε τε κυμα κελαινον
Κορθυεται, πολλον δε παρεξ αλα φυκος εχευαν.
Ὡς εδαϊζετο θυμος ενι στηθεσσιν Αχαιων. Il. ix. 4.

As from its cloudy dungeon iſſuing forth
A double tempeſt of the weſt and north
Swells o'er the ſea, from Thracian's frozen ſhore,
Heaps waves on waves, and bids the Ægean roar;
This way and that, the boiling deeps are toſt;
Such various paſſions urg'd the troubled hoſt. Pope.

the

the Ionian ſhore covered with ſea-wreck, by a ſucceſſion of waves breaking on its beach, will make the fore ground, where the Poet views, admires, and deſcribes the whole.

A curious and attentive obſerver of nature is perhaps moſt liable to retain thoſe marks of locality, which it has been my object to trace in the Poet: An elegant conception of external forms cannot eaſily diveſt itſelf of the preciſe order and arrangement of objects, with which it has at any time connected the idea of beauty; hence that Ionian point of view, to which Homer's ſcenery is ſo much adapted, ſometimes even in violation of unity of place.

We ſhall find this negligence more excuſable, if we credit that probable tradition of the wandering Bard's chanting his compoſitions to his countrymen, in the manner practiſed at this day in the Eaſt: a tradition which is favoured by the dramatick caſt of the Iliad and Odyſſey. I have often admired the ſpirited and theatrical action of Italian and Eaſtern Poets, when they recite in the open air, pointing out each object of deſcription in an imaginary ſcenery of their own extempore creation, availing themſelves however of every real appearance of nature within view of their Audience, that is applicable to their ſubject, and, by that means, connecting, in ſome degree, the compoſition with the ſcenery of the ſpot where the recital is made.

After what has been ſaid on this paſſage, I ſhould think it needleſs to mention the cenſure Eratoſthenes paſſed upon it, had it not been ſo frequently produced to the Poet's diſadvantage, and urged as a proof of his ignorance in geography. The error laid to his charge is, that of making the Weſt wind blow from Thrace. I ſhall reſt his defence againſt this accuſation upon the obvious anſwer of Strabo to ſo ſtrange a piece of criticiſm; which is, in ſubſtance, that Eratoſthenes miſtakes the Poet, when he concludes from this paſſage, that he aſſerts, as a general propoſition, that the Weſt wind blows from Thrace; the wind here mentioned blows from the Thracian mountains upon the Ægean ſea, and muſt of courſe be the Weſt wind.

But to proceed to other inſtances of the ſame kind, when the formidable march of Ajax with his corps, is compared to a threatening ſtorm coming from the ſea, I muſt obſerve (as an illuſtraſtation, not of the obvious beauties of the ſimile, but of the Poet's country) that this can be no other than an Ionian, or, at leaſt, an Aſiatic ſtorm; for it is raiſed by a Weſt wind, which, in thoſe ſeas, can blow on that coaſt alone.

When, again, the irreſiſtible rage of Hector is compared to the violence of Zephyrus buffeting the waves, we are not immediately reconciled to this wind's appearance in that rough character, ſo little known to Weſtern climates, and ſo unlike the playful Zephyr of modern Poetry; but, before we condemn Homer as negligent of nature, we ſhould ſee, whether he is not uniform in this repreſentation, and whether this is not the true Ionian Character of Zephyrus.

The very next ſimile of the ſame book is as much to our purpoſe, where the numbers, tumult, and eagerneſs of the army collecting to engage, are compared to a growing ſtorm, which begins at ſea, and proceeds to vent its rage upon the ſhore; the Weſt wind is again employed in this Ionian picture, and we ſhall be leſs ſurpriſed to ſee the ſame alluſion ſo ſoon repeated, when we find, that of all the appearances of nature, of a kind ſo generally ſubject to variation, there is none ſo conſtant upon this coaſt; for at Smyrna, the Weſt wind blows into the gulph for ſeveral hours, almoſt every day during the Summer ſeaſon, generally beginning, in a gentle breeze, before twelve o'clock, but freſhening conſiderably towards the heat of the day, and dying away in the evening; during a ſtay of ſome days in this city, at three different times, I had an opportunity of obſerving the various degrees of this progreſs, from the firſt dark curl on the ſurface of the water, to its greateſt agitation, which was ſometimes violent. Though thoſe appearances admit of variation, both as to the degree of ſtrength, and the preciſe time of their commencement, yet they ſeldom fail entirely; this wind, upon which the health and pleaſure of the inhabitants ſo much depend, is, by them, called the *Inbat*; the Frank merchants have long galleries running from their houſes, ſupported by pillars, and terminating in a chioſque, or open ſummer-houſe, to catch this cooling breeze, which, when moderate, adds greatly to the oriental luxury of their coffee and pipe.

We have ſeen how happily the Poet has made uſe of the growing violence of this wind, when he paints the increaſing tumult and agitation of troops ruſhing to battle; but, in a ſtill ſilent picture, the alluſion is confined to the firſt dubious ſymptoms of its approach, which are perceived rather by the colour, than by any ſound or motion of the water, as in the following inſtance:

When Hector challenges the moſt valiant of the Greeks to ſingle combat, both armies are ordered to ſit down to hear his propoſal; the plain, thus extenſively covered with ſhields, helmets, and ſpears, is, in the moment of this ſolemn pauſe, compared to the ſea, when a riſing weſtern breeze has ſpread a dark ſhade over its ſurface.

When the reader has compared the ſimilies I have pointed out, with the original materials which I have alſo laid before him, I ſhall ſubmit to his conſideration, as matter of doubtful conjecture, whether the Poet, thoroughly familiarized to thoſe Ionian features, may not have inadvertently introduced ſome of them in the following picture, to which they do not ſo properly belong. When Eidothea, the daughter of Proteus, informs Menelaus, at Pharos, of the time when her father is to emerge from the ſea, the circumſtance of Zephyrus, introduced, in a deſcription of noon, darkening the ſurface of the water, is ſo perfectly Ionian, and ſo merely accidental to the coaſt of Egypt, that I cannot help ſuſpecting the Poet brought this image from *home*, not attending to the *ſcene*, nor, indeed, to the *diſtreſs*, of the ſtory to which it is applied; for Menelaus, who laments ſo feelingly his confinement at Pharos, might have ſailed with this Weſt wind.

It would add no ſmall weight to this reaſoning could I find Virgil on my ſide of the queſtion; his judgment with regard to the Greek Poet deſerves more attention, than the higheſt critical authority we can appeal to on this ſubject; and if we examine the imitations he has left us of ſome of the laſt paſſages to which I have referred, we ſhall ſee, that, in each inſtance, he has omitted the original Ionian circumſtance of Zephyrus.

In claiming the ſanction of ſo reſpectable an opinion, I do not conclude from this omiſſion (what is immaterial to my purpoſe) that Virgil ſaw theſe pictures were Ionian: it is enough that he ſaw they were not Italian; as every reader muſt, who conſiders that Zephyrus is not the ſtormy wind of that country, and that it does not blow directly on any part of the Italian coaſt.

In ſhort, though Virgil copied Homer, perhaps, more than is generally imagined, at leaſt more than I have ſeen pointed out; yet, in the inſtances before us, he copied him no further than he found Homer and Nature to agree; and if he rejected the circumſtance which I call local, and retained only the general beauties of his great maſter, in ſo doing, he very properly accommodated himſelf to the natural hiſtory of his own country; thus the compliment of the Italian to the Ionian Poet was as great, as the ſuperior judgment of the one could pay to the ſuperior invention of the other.

The old fable of a cave in the mountains of Thrace, which was the habitation of the Winds, was moſt probably taken from Homer; but ſucceeding Poets, the inhabitants of more weſtern climates, have dropped the particularities of this piece of mythology, which ſeem to mark it the peculiar growth of Ionia, or that neighbourhood, and are ſatisfied with the general idea of *all* the winds dwelling, *indiſcriminately*, in thoſe lofty mountains; whereas Boreas and Zephyrus are the only winds he deſcribes as the ſettled inhabitants of this country; and when, upon one occaſion, he aſſembles them all here, it is at an entertainment in the *houſe* of Zephyrus, who appears to be at *home*, whilſt the reſt of the company are gueſts and viſitants.

I think, nothing leads us more directly towards the Poet's *Home*, than his general manner of treating countries, in proportion to their remoteneſs from Ionia, in the ſtyle of a traveller, and with that reverence and curioſity, which diſtance is apt to raiſe; while this ſpot, and (which is more remarkable) even the grand ſcene of action of the Iliad, in its neighbourhood, ſeem to have been too familiar and indifferent for deſcription, and are introduced, not upon their own account, but from their inſeparable connection with facts; and yet it is very obſervable, that, whenever

whenever they appear, it is always under that exact and juſt repreſentation, which ſhews a perfect knowledge of the ground.

Should it be objected, that, notwithſtanding the diſtance of Egypt and Phœnicia from Ionia, we do not find the *ſpecioſa miracula* of the Poet in thoſe countries, nor are they choſen for ſcenes of the marvellous; it may be anſwered, that they were too much diſtinguiſhed, the one by Arts, Commerce, and Navigation, and the other by Fertility, Population, and Science, to have admitted any repreſentations, not coinciding, in ſome meaſure, with thoſe notorious circumſtances; while the unfrequented ſouthern coaſt of Italy, with the iſland of Sicily, and the kingdoms of Alcinous and Ulyſſes, though not more diſtant, were leſs known, and, of courſe, gave a freer ſcope to the Poet's fancy.

The *major è longinquo reverentia* is an obſervation too well founded in Nature to have eſcaped Homer; and though I may be accuſed of refinement, ſhould I carry my conjectures on this head ſo far as to ſuſpect that it influenced him in chuſing the Hero of one of his poems from a country very remote from his own, yet I muſt obſerve, that, whether it was a matter of accident or choice, of all the Grecian Princes who went to Troy, Ulyſſes was the moſt diſtant; it certainly was a circumſtance which accommodated the Odyſſey particularly to an Ionian meridian.

Were I to be guided by the faint lights which Hiſtory has thrown upon this ſubject, I ſhould ſay, that Homer was of Chios or Smyrna; and were I, upon the ſame information, to take a part in that competition, which has ſubſiſted above two thouſand years, between theſe and many other places, I ſhould declare for the firſt, though, when I collect my evidence merely from the Iliad and Odyſſey, I am rather inclined to give it in favour of the latter. But whatever has been offered, as mere conjecture, to ſhew the Poet was an Aſiatic, cannot, without refinement, be alledged as a reaſon to determine whether he was an Ionian or an Æolian, and ſtill leſs to decide between Chios or Smyrna: if, therefore, I am at all prepoſſeſſed in favour of the latter (perhaps becauſe I ſtaid longeſt there), I am ready to give up both, for any other part of the Aſiatic coaſt, from Rhodes to Tenedos, which future travellers may, upon more careful examination, find moſt worthy of that honour[f].

[f] See Homer's Mythology, for further illuſtration of his Country.

HOMER'S

HOMER'S TRAVELS.

AND FIRST HIS NAVIGATION.

HAVING taken a ſhort view of the Poet *at home*, if, according to our propoſed order, we follow him *abroad*, making the tour of the Mediterranean in his company, I think, we ſhall find him a traveller of much curioſity and obſervation.

But here, again, as in the preceding part of our inquiry, which relates to his Country, I muſt reject the feeble aid of Hiſtory, and attempt, as far as may be, to make Homer his own Biographer; a taſk rendered not a little difficult, by that ſingular modeſty, with which he ſeems, as if purpoſely, to have avoided whatever could have let us into any part of his own ſtory. I ſhall, however, collect what has occurred, as probable conjecture, on this head, chiefly from his *Navigation* and *Geography*, where it is moſt reaſonable to expect ſuch matter as may throw ſome light on this obſcure ſubject.

The Iliad has been cenſured, with reaſon, for abounding too much in deſcriptions of arms, deaths, combats, and bloodſhed; and perhaps ſome may think that the ſubject of the Odyſſey engages the Poet too frequently in accounts of ſhips, ſtorms, and navigation. To ſhew that theſe ſcenes were familiar to the Poet, will rather account than apologize for his repetition of them; but, as we only undertake to be anſwerable for his correct imitation, it is ſufficient to obſerve here, that his probable occupations, and the ſtate[g] of ſociety at that period, muſt naturally have made him converſant in thoſe matters, and that frequent navigation habituated him to the language and manners of ſea-faring men, as well as to a general knowledge of their profeſſion.

If our conjectures with regard to his country are founded, he lived in an iſland, or upon the ſea-coaſt. The Aſiatic Greeks did not ſpread into the inland parts of that continent, but confined themſelves to the ſhore, looking towards their mother country with an attachment and reſpect unknown to later ages.

When the great objects of human purſuit, whether wealth, power, honours, or ſcience, were not to be acquired at home, it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a turn of mind like Homer's, ſhould, in his youthful days, ſit down contented with the poverty, ignorance, and inglorious inſignificance of his native ſpot; for though ambition or avarice might not, yet curioſity, which we cannot doubt his poſſeſſing in a great degree, would, naturally, draw him forth into the active ſcene. An impatient thirſt after knowledge was, in thoſe days, only to be ſatisfied by travelling; the tranquillity and ſecurity eſſentially neceſſary to ſtudious retirement were unknown to that ſtate, either of letters or government, at leaſt in Greece; Homer had therefore only the great book of nature to peruſe, and was *original* from neceſſity as well as by genius.

Few countries of the ſame extent have ſo much ſea-coaſt as Greece; the intercourſe of its inhabitants with other countries, or with one another, was moſtly kept up by water; there is no land-journey regularly deſcribed, either in the Iliad or Odyſſey, except that ſhort one of Telemachus from Pylos to Mycenæ; and even there Neſtor ſubmits to the choice of his gueſt the alternative of going by ſea, though much the longeſt way.

In this ſtate of things, and conſidering how much the preſent various occupations of high and low life were then confined to one rank and order of men, it is not extraordinary that we ſhould find the Poet ſo knowing, as well in the buſineſs of the ſhip-wright as of the ſailor; indeed, it is only by following him through each of thoſe arts, that hiſtory is furniſhed with the earlieſt account of them. Let us therefore firſt examine his method of building, and next his manner of navigating a ſhip.

Agreeable

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g. See the article of Manners.

Agreeable to this account of ancient ſhips and ſhip-building, we ſee, that though Homer's ſeamen are expert in their monœuvre, yet they are confined to the precautions of that timid coaſting navigation which is at this day practiſed in the Mediterranean, in ſlight undecked veſſels, unfit to reſiſt the open ſea. Their firſt care is, to venture as little as poſſible out of ſight of land, to run along ſhore and to be ready to put in, and draw up their ſhips on the beach, if there is no port, on the firſt appearance of foul weather.

We find Neſtor, Diomedes, and Menelaus, conſulting, at Leſbos, upon a doubt, which this imperfect ſtate of the art alone could ſuggeſt; the queſtion was, whether, in their return to Greece, they ſhould keep the Aſiatic coaſt till they paſt Chios, which was the moſt *ſecure*, but the moſt *tedious* way home, or venture directly acroſs the open ſea, which was the *ſhorteſt*, but the moſt *dangerous*?

I was preſent at a conſulation on the ſame ſort of queſtion, near the ſame place, and under the ſame circumſtances as far as they concern the illuſtration of our preſent inquiry. In the year 1742, being on board His Majeſty's ſhip the Chatham, then eſcorting the Turkey trade from Conſtantinople to Scanderoon, when we were between Mytelene and Scio, and due north of the latter, in a dark night, with a briſk gale at north-weſt, our Greek Pilot propoſed puſhing through the channel of Scio; but our officers, not caring to engage ſo much with the land in that narrow paſſage, preferred the broad courſe, and, hawling cloſe up to the wind, left the Scio on the larboard ſide.

If we compare our ſituation with that of Neſtor, Diomede, and Menelaus, who had the ableſt pilot of that age on board, we ſee, that though our deſtinations were different, our point under deliberation was ſo far preciſely the ſame, that we both doubted between the *ſhorteſt* and the *ſureſt* way: they ventured to ſea, though it was moſt dangerous; we choſe it, becauſe it was moſt ſafe; and this conſtitutes one of the great differences between ancient and modern navigation.

As the moſt reſpectable commentators on Homer have, by their different conſtructions of part of the paſſage here alluded to, deviated from that plain ſenſe of the Poet, in which I think his accuracy conſiſts, I ſhall enter a little more largely into the conſideration of the lines which deſcribe this navigation, in order to aſcertain their meaning; though it may carry us a little beyond the object immediately before us, it will only anticipate a ſpecimen of his *hiſtorical accuracy* (one of the propoſed objects of this eſſay), and will ſhew how cautious we ſhould be not to diſturb that delicate connection and thread of *circumſtances*, which are ſeldom deranged, even by the ſmalleſt alteration, without endangering his truth and conſiſtence.

Should we, in this view, ſtrip thoſe lines of their poetical dreſs, and extract a plain narrative or journal from the moſt literal and natural conſtruction of the whole paſſage, it will, with very little paraphraſe, and that entirely furniſhed by the Poet himſelf, produce the following piece of ancient hiſtory.

" The demolition of Troy being at length accompliſhed, Agamemnon and Menelaus, " diſagreeing about the farther meaſures to be taken upon that occaſion, ſummoned a council, " in order to ſtate their different opinions; but this was done precipitately, in the evening, " an unſeaſonable time for deliberation, when the chiefs, riſing from table, and heated with " wine, came improperly prepared for conſiderations of that moment: the event correſponded " with the irregularity of ſuch a proceeding; for, the council being aſſembled, Menelaus propoſed, " that they ſhould embark for Greece, but Agamemnon adviſed them firſt to appeaſe the wrath " of Minerva by a hecatomb; this produced a debate, which ended in much altercation between " the brothers, ſo that the aſſembly broke up tumultuouſly, without coming to any reſolution.

" The Grecian army was, by this means, divided into two parties, one eſpouſing the ſentiments " of Agamemnon, and the other thoſe of Menelaus. Of the laſt were Neſtor, Diomede, and " Ulyſſes; who, having embarked their women and baggage, ſailed *next morning*, with a fair " wind, for Tenedos, where they ſacrificed to the gods, to grant them a propitious voyage.

" Here

" Here a ſecond diſpute aroſe; for Ulyſſes's party, paying court to the Commander in chief, " returned to Troy; but Neſtor, foreſeeing the miſchiefs likely to happen, prudently continued " his voyage with Diomede to Leſbos, the *ſecond day*, leaving Menelaus behind at Tenedos. " However, Menelaus followed and overtook them, the ſame day, at Leſbos, where he found " them ſettling their voyage, and deliberating whether, in that advanced ſeaſon, it were moſt " adviſeable to conſult their ſafety in the ſlower method of coaſting round by Mimas and the " Cycladæ, or to riſk the ſhorter paſſage, and make directly for Eubœa.

" They preferred the moſt expeditious courſe, and ſailed, the *third day*, from Leſbos; the wind " proving very favourable, they made Geræſtum that night.

" Having ſo proſperouſly accompliſhed the moſt dangerous part of their navigation, they " offered a ſacrifice of thanks to Neptune; and the wind being ſtill fair, they purſued their " voyage the *fourth day*, along the coaſt of Greece. As they paſſed the Sunian promontory, " Menelaus had the misfortune of loſing his pilot Phrontis, who died ſuddenly: though " impatient to ſee his native country, he ſtopped here to perform the funeral rites, and pay the " laſt duties to his ſkilful friend; but Diomede continued his voyage, and arrived the ſame day " at Argos, being the *fourth* from his departure from Troy; Neſtor took the advantage of the " ſame fair wind, which carried him to Pylos."

This journal of *four days* navigation is ſo entirely Homer, and Homer only, the circumſtances of time and diſtance correſpond ſo exactly with one another, and bore ſo ſcrupulous an examination when we made the ſame voyage, that I ſhall not trouble the reader with any other confutation, either of Euſtathius or Madam Dacier's ſenſe of this paſſage, into which the firſt was led by miſtaking the meaning of one word, and the laſt, by miſtaking the diſtance from Leſbos to Eubœa; but both, by attending more to grammatical criticiſm than to the true genius and character of the poet.

In this little extract from the hiſtory of the heroic times, I have been minute in referring to my authority for every fact, in order to ſhew, that I take no liberties with the Poet's obvious and natural meaning. If I have added to the narrative a very few explanatory circumſtances, they are ſcrupulouſly derived from the ſame ſource, and ſhew that Homer is never ſo well underſtood, as when he is his own commentator.

Though, from the general character by which Homer conſtantly diſtinguiſhes the Phœnicians as a commercial ſeafaring people, it has been naturally ſuppoſed, that he was indebted to that nation for much of his information with regard to diſtant voyages; yet I think we cannot be at a loſs to account for the Poet's acquiring a good deal of this ſort of knowledge at home. We know the Ionians were among the earlieſt navigators, particularly the Phocæans and Mileſians. The former are expreſsly called the diſcoverers of *Adria*, *Iberia*, *Tuſcany*, and *Tarteſſus*; they are ſaid to be the firſt, among the Greeks, who undertook long voyages; and we find they had eſtabliſhed an intercourſe, and even formed cloſe and friendly connections, on the ocean, as early as the time of Cyrus the Great. The Mileſians, ſo remarkable for colonization that they had founded above ſeventy cities in different parts of the world, were reſpectable at ſea long before the Perſian invaſion; nor can we, except from the reſources of their navigation and commerce, account for their being a match for the Lydian monarchy, as early as the reign of Gyges, up to which period, from that of Crœſus, we can trace theſe two nations almoſt conſtantly at war.

When we conſider how far back this leads us, upon explicit hiſtorical authority, and without the equivocal and ſuſpicious aid of etymology, upon which Phœnician colonization is ſo much extended; it does not ſeem probable that Homer's countrymen ſhould have arrived at ſo flouriſhing a ſtate of navigation, ſo ſoon after his age, without having made ſome progreſs towards it before his time.

To what extent navigation was known to him, either from his own experience or the information of others, is rendered difficult to aſcertain, by the conſtant method he follows of preſerving ſome reality

reality in his wildeſt fictions. The hiſtory of the Cimmerians ſeems to have furniſhed ſome of his ideas with regard to the gloomy infernal ſhades, and the diſtinguiſhing features in the Phæacian character are Phœnician. Even where he is moſt fabulous, he takes the hint from tales propagated before his time, and embroiders his own variations on that extravagance, which had already the ſanction of popular credulity; as in his account of the claſhing of Scylla and Charybdis, which is evidently taken from the Argonautic ſtory of the Symplegades. Thus the Poet's genius, though impatient of the limited knowledge of his age, is unwilling to abandon Nature; and when he does, it is in favour of what vulgar opinion had already ſubſtituted in her place. This mixture of ſomething that was either true, or commonly believed to be ſo, with regard to the ſcene of his fabulous narration, is obſervable in his deſcription of the iſlands of Circe, Æolus, and, above all, in that of Calypſo.

His knowledge of the ſun ſetting in the ocean might fall within the obſervation even of that confined ſtate of navigation, which we may reaſonably allow to his age; for it is probable, that not only the Phœnicians, but the Poet's countrymen, had paſſed the Pillars of Hercules, and of courſe could, as eye-witneſſes, report ſuch an appearance: but how he could learn that the ſun riſes out of the ocean, or that the globe is entirely ſurrounded by water, is, I confeſs, ſo much beyond my comprehenſion, that I am rather inclined to attribute it to gueſs and conjecture, than to the philoſophy of thoſe times, or to any lights which navigation could have furniſhed; nor am I ſurpriſed that, ſo much later, Herodotus ſhould treat this idea of an ocean, where the ſun riſes, as a poetical fiction.

That the Euxine or Black Sea was known to Homer, I have not the leaſt doubt; of this his deſcription of the Hippomolgians, and other nations in its neighbourhood, affords ſufficient proofs; nor can we draw any concluſions to the contrary, from his neither mentioning this ſea, nor Sinope and other cities on its coaſt. It is ſtrange how far the argument of the Poet's ignorance of Places, becauſe he does not expreſsly mention them, has been carried, but never more unreaſonably than in the preſent caſe. Is it a fair way of judging to ſuppoſe, that Homer did not know Sinope, a colony founded by his own countrymen, the Ionians, rather than conclude, either that he did not think proper to take notice of this, more than of ſeveral other places not leſs conſiderable, or that it was founded after his time, or that he could not, without groſs anachroniſm, introduce, in the times of the Trojan war, the name of a city built ſo long after?

I ſhall not therefore conclude, that if Homer had known the Adriatic, he would have mentioned or deſcribed that ſea, becauſe its flux and reflux muſt have been matter of particular curioſity to the Aſiatic Greeks; for we ſee that he takes no notice of the tides of the Euripus, ſo much the object of admiration in all times, though this ſtreight, where the Grecian fleet firſt aſſembled, is in the midſt of thoſe countries which he has deſcribed with great moſt accuracy.

I muſt, nevertheleſs, obſerve, that though ſome marks of moſt other parts of the Mediterranean are to be found in the Iliad or Odyſſey, yet I could not diſcover the leaſt trace of the Adriatic in either of thoſe Poems. If the aſſertion of Herodotus be true, that this ſea was diſcovered by an Ionian, there is great propriety in the Poet's ſilence, as it is a mark of his care to diſtinguiſh the ſtate of things in his own age, from that of the times he deſcribes. I muſt own, that, beſides the poſitive teſtimony of the oldeſt profane hiſtorian, there are other reaſons which incline me to believe, that the coaſts of the Adriatic, though not ſo diſtant as many places better known, were among the later Greek diſcoveries in navigation. I ſhall give the reader the obſervations upon which this conjecture is founded, as they occurred to me in travelling on the Dalmatian and Italian ſides of this gulph, but more particularly in a voyage I made, in May 1742, from Venice to Corfou, in a Venetian ſhip, the *Ercole e Roſa*, commanded by Captain Rota, who had forty years conſtant experience of that navigation.

The difference between the Dalmatian and Italian coaſts of the Adriatic is remarkable; that of Dalmatia is bold and ſteep, with ſome good ports for the largeſt ſhips; few rivers

are diſcharged on this ſide of the gulph, the diſpoſition of the ground being ſuch, that almoſt all the moiſture of the adjacent countries is carried into the Danube.

The Italian ſhore, on the contrary, is low, flat, and ſhoaly. Here great rivers from the Alps, and rapid torrents from the Apennines, carry much rubbiſh into the ſea, and, by that means, cauſe the land to encroach upon it; ſo that all the harbours, from Venice to Brunduſium, are, in ſome degree, affected by it, according to their vicinity to thoſe rivers and torrents. Ravenna, once the principal harbour and naval ſtation of the Romans on that ſide of Italy, being in the neighbourhood of the Po, has been long ſince choked up, and the place where it was ſituated is now a league from the ſea.

The general navigation of this ſea (particularly that of the Venetians) is regulated agreeably to this deſcription of it. Ships avoid the Italian ſhore, and indeed ſeldom get ſight of it, though in a very clear day I could diſcover the mountains of Ancona from thoſe of the oppoſite ſide. They keep the Dalmatian coaſt, in ſailing for Venice, till they get as high as Rovigno, a conſiderable town in Iſtria, where, in ſummer, they take in a pilot to conduct them acroſs the gulph to Venice; but, in the dangerous winter months, they keep the coaſt as far up as Parenzo, ten miles higher, before they ſteer directly for Venice; and ſignals are erected, alternately, at Rovigno and Parenzo, according to the ſeaſon of the year, to ſignify at which of thoſe places pilots attend. This is the common method obſerved by ſhips bound for Venice, though Engliſh veſſels often neglect thoſe precautions.

Cauſes, ſo permanent and invariable in their nature, muſt have always produced thoſe effects, and we may reaſonably ſuppoſe the Italian ſhore to have been ever dangerous, and that the method of keeping cloſe upon the Dalmatian coaſt was ſtill more ſtrictly followed, in the early and imperfect ſtate of navigation. This is the courſe which Virgil makes Antenor take; but with this difference, that, not having the advantage of a pilot, by which the preſent navigation is ſhortened, he proceeded along ſhore to the furtheſt extremity of the gulph. This was, no doubt, the Roman courſe in Virgil's time; but, as the neceſſity of this circuitous navigation could never occur to thoſe who are unacquainted with the nature of the Italian and Dalmatian coaſts, and have formed their ideas of Antenor's voyage from maps alone, it is not extraordinary, that the commentators ſhould not have been able hitherto to comprehend the geography of one of the moſt original deſcriptions of the Æneid. Let us ſee the paſſage; the Poet's vindication ſeems to lie within a narrow compaſs, and is not foreign to our ſubject.

Antenor potuit, mediis elapſus Achivis,
Illyricos penetrare ſinus atque intima tutus
Regna Liburnorum, & fontem ſuperare *Timavi*;
Unde per ora novem vaſto cum murmure montis
It mare præruptum, & pelago premit arva ſonanti.
Hæc tamen ille *urbem Patavi* ſedeſque locavit
Teucrorum [h]. —— Æn. i. 242.

A direct

[h] As theſe lines are before me, I cannot help obſerving that the words *mare præruptum* ſeems to ſignifies *literally* the Sea, and not *figuratively* the river Timavus, as it is commonly underſtood; and that this is not a deſcription of the river running with violence into the ſea, but of the ſea burſting into the channel, and even the ſources of the river, and overflowing the land. I wonder how this eſcaped my late friend Mr. Holdſworth, who had been upon the ſpot, and muſt have ſeen that the Timavus is a collection of ſeveral ſprings, joining in one ſtream, which diſcharges itſelf into the ſea quietly, after a very ſhort courſe, when the tide is out; but, when the tide comes in, it not only beats back the freſh water with noiſe and violence, but overflows the country.

The

A direct courſe, as we have traced it on the annexed map, muſt have brought Antenor to Padua, before he could reach the Timavus, contrary to the deſcription in thoſe lines. Various conjectures have been formed to ſolve this difficulty: Some charge Virgil with a miſtake in geography, others change the ſituation of Padua, rather than give up the Poet; while a third conjecture, in defiance of the univerſal teſtimony of antiquity, and in ſpite of Virgil's accurate deſcription, changes the river, and will have the Brent to be the Timavus of the ancients; but they all agree in the obſcurity of the paſſage. Now, if, as we have ſtated it, agreeable both to the principle and practice of this navigation, we bring Antenor along the Illyrian ſhore, he muſt paſs the Timavus before he arrives at the place of his deſtination, and his progreſs will be marked exactly in that order in which it is laid down by the Poet; viz. Illyrium, Liburnia, Timavus, Padua.

But whatever Virgil and the Roman hiſtorians may ſay of either Antenor's or Diomede's voyage, it is without any authority from Homer, who is ſo far from taking any notice of the Adriatic, that he appears to make Ithaca the boundary of his geographical knowledge that way, and ſeems to treat Corcyra with that ambiguity which we have obſerved him to affect, when he gets into his fabulous regions; and the more I conſider the coaſts of this ſea, its dangerous navigation, and the inhoſpitality and ferocity of the inhabitants of the north-eaſt coaſt, at all times, from the Sinus Flanaticus (Gulph of Quarner) to the Acroceronian mountains incluſively, the more I am inclined to think, it was but imperfectly known to Greece, for ſome time after the Trojan war.

HOMER'S WINDS.

UNDER the article of Homer's Country, we have anticipated ſome obſervations on the Winds of that climate, but his Navigation naturally engages us in a further conſideration of this ſubject. We find only thoſe which blow from the four cardinal points expreſsly mentioned in the Iliad and Odyſſey. In the ſtorm which Neptune prepares againſt Ulyſſes, ſailing from Calypſo's iſland, they are all introduced in the following order, Eurus, Notus, Zephyrus, and Boreas.

So imperfect a liſt of Winds correſponds with the coaſting navigation of thoſe times, and forbids us to expect more than a general idea of their nature and qualities. Some of the Ancients imagined, that the Poet meant to expreſs a ſubdiviſion of thoſe principal winds by certain epithets; as for inſtance, by the *hard-blowing* Zephyrus, they underſtood, not merely a different quality, but a different direction of Zephyrus from that in which it is underſtood, when no epithet is applied: But I think, if Homer intended to convey any idea of thoſe intermediate winds (for which it would ſeem the Greek language had not yet found a name), it is rather to be diſcovered where he employs two of them together, as in the inſtance already taken notice of, where Boreas and Zephyrus blow from the Thracian mountains on the Ægean ſea; for if we tranſlate them literally, the *North-weſt*, we ſhall bring that deſcription ſtill nearer to nature and truth.

Taking

The ſingularity of this communication of the Adriatic with the ſources of the Timavus, together with its ſituation at the head of the Gulph, probably gave riſe to a very antient vulgar opinion, which tradition has preſerved among the common people to this day; they ſay the Timavus ſupplies the Adriatic, and they call it the mother of that ſea: Polybius took notice of this (ſee Strabo, lib. v.) επιχωριους φησιν και μητερα θαλαττης ονομαζειν τον τοπον, and the peaſants at this time call it, *La madre del mare*.

Taking thoſe winds in the order in which the Poet has placed them, we find their moſt remarkable difference of character is, that Eurus and Notus are more *mild* and *gentle*, Zephyrus and Boreas more *ſtormy* and *boiſterous*. The two firſt are introduced leſs frequently than the laſt; for, as illuſions of this kind generally ſerve to illuſtrate animated pictures, the characters of Zephyrus and Boreas beſt ſuit the Poet's purpoſe upon ſuch occaſions; Eurus is never diſtinguiſhed by an epithet, and Notus only by that of *ſwift*; they are never repreſented as perſons, except in one inſtance; they are deſcribed by qualities, the reverſe of thoſe of their antagoniſt winds; for Eurus is employed in melting the ſnow which Zephyrus brings down, and Notus covers the mountain-tops with clouds, which it is the buſineſs of Boreas to diſpel.

Zephyrus is called *hard-blowing*, *rapid*, the *ſwifteſt* of all the winds, *noiſy*, *whiſtling* or *rattling*, *moiſt*, and is repreſented as bringing *rain* or *ſnow*.

I find two paſſages in the Odyſſey, which ſeem to give an idea of Zephyrus, different from this general character, and more like the Zephyr of modern poetry; one is the Poet's deſcription of the Elyſian plain, "where neither winter's ſnow or rain are ſeen, but a continual refreſhing Zephyr "blows from the ocean;" the other is in the deſcription of Alcinous's gardens, where the rich vegetation is aſcribed to a conſtant Zephyr.

When we recollect (what I have above attempted to prove) that the Zephyr of Homer's country, upon which he muſt have formed his familiar ideas of that wind, blew from the mountains of Thrace, and that the two inſtances I have given are the only ones in which he deſcribes the qualites of that wind in a diſtant weſtern climate, inſtead of contradiction and inconſiſtence, we diſcover an extenſive knowledge of nature; for, while he is accurate in his accounts of the known appearances of his own country, he accommodates his deſcriptions to what he had either heard or ſeen of diſtant parts: to have uſed the *gentle Zephyr*, in a ſimile addreſſed to the Ionian readers, or to have given the character of *ſeverity* to that of weſtern climates, would have been equally incorrect.

Both Zephyrus and Boreas make their appearance as perſons; they are equally concerned in kindling the funeral pile of Patroclus, at the prayer of Achilles. Xanthus and Balius, the immortal horſes of that hero, are (in the jockey phraſe) out of Podarge by Zephyrus; a pedigree worthy of Homer's imagination, but, perhaps, like many of his fictions, engrafted upon ſome tradition, which had popular prejudice on it's ſide; for a ſtrange notion prevailed, that, upon the coaſt of the Atlantic ocean, mares were impregnated by the weſt wind; and however ridiculous this opinion may appear, it has been ſeriouſly ſupported by grave and reſpectable writers of a more enlightened age. As to the amours[d] of Zephyrus and Flora, they are the natural mythology of later poets and of a more weſtern climate, which cannot fail to pleaſe an Engliſh reader; but they are unknown to Ionia and Homer.

Though I am perſuaded, that a knowledge of the Aſiatic ſide of the Archipelago would reconcile the Reader to this piece of natural hiſtory, upon which Homer's character of Zephyrus is founded; yet it is not eaſy to bring an imagination, already differently impreſſed, to connect the idea of mildneſs with Eurus, and of ſeverity with Zephyrus. It is, perhaps, ſtill more difficult to combat prepoſſeſſion in this province of poetical deſcription, where genius is apt to make its firſt efforts, and to have formed its own ideas of the external face of nature, not eaſily removed. Thus Mr. Pope, whoſe early fancy was already richly ſtocked with the original imagery of an Engliſh climate, and had produced his Paſtorals before he attempted Homer, is conſtantly intermixing ſomething of his own, in the landſcape and rural ſcenery of the Iliad and Odyſſey; in this inſtance he expreſsly ſubſtitutes his *gentle Zephyr*, in the room of Homer's Ζεφυρος δυσαης.

Boreas.

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[d] The laconic account which Flora gives of the ſeaſon, commencement, progreſs, and concluſion, of her adventure with Zephyrus, has all the prettineſs of that manner which is peculiar to Ovid:

Ver erat; errabam, Zephyrus conſpexit; abibam.
Inſequitur; fugio; fortior ille fuit.

Boreas is *rapid* and *violent*, but *ſerene* and *drying*, diſpels *clouds*, brings *hoar froſt* and *ſnow*, is *clear*, *pure*, *wholeſome*, and *reviving*.

This account of Boreas coincides much more with that of modern poetry, as it is more agreeable to the experience and obſervation of weſtern climates, than that of Eurus and Zephyrus.

It has probably been owing to Homer's example, that ſucceeding Poets and Artiſts, though, in other reſpects, departing from his deſcription of thoſe ſubjects, often repreſent Boreas and Zephyrus as perſons. Their air and figure are familiar to us in the machinery of modern Poetry, as well as in the works of Painters and Sculptors, who give the character of *harſh* and *aged ſeverity* to one, and that of *youthful beauty* and *gentleneſs* to the other; while Eurus and Notus, eſpecially the latter, appear ſo ſeldom in a human ſhape, that we have no formed idea of their perſons.

We find the figures of the four principal with the four intermediate Winds, in alto relievo, bigger than life, on the octagon tower of Andronicus Cyrrheſtes at Athens. As this is the only monument of antiquity that I have ſeen where they are ſo well executed and ſo well preſerved, I examined them with a view to thoſe conformities between the Poet and the Sculptor, by which we trace the borrowed idea to its original ſource, but with little ſucceſs. Whether it was that the Artiſt was confined to particular ideas by the intended uſe of this tower, which was intirely adapted to the meridian of Attica, or that his invention was inferior to his execution, I ſhall not venture to judge, but there is a ſameneſs of attitude, drapery, and character in his Winds, which would make it very difficult to diſtinguiſh their names, were they not inſcribed over each figure.

I cannot finiſh this article without comparing Homer and Virgil in this reſpect, in order to ſhew the ſuperior accuracy of the former with regard to thoſe minute circumſtances of nature and truth. The Winds which Homer employs in navigation are generally adapted to the ſhip's courſe, and the circumſtances of the ſhip's voyage which he deſcribes, which Virgil frequently neglects, as I could ſhew in many inſtances. I ſhall confine myſelf to one, which ſeems remarkable. The deſcription of the departure of Æneas from Carthage is not only inconſiſtent with truth and poſſibility, in this reſpect, but contradictory to itſelf. He ſails in the morning with a Weſt Wind [e], which the Poet very improbably calls favourable; but before he is out of ſight of Carthage, we find him purſuing his courſe with a [f] North Wind, which is ſtill more contrary to his intended courſe; when, in the evening, he has got clear of the land, the Wind changes to the Weſt with every prognoſtick of a dark ſtormy night; Palinurus, in this ſituation, orders the mariners to reef their ſails and ply their oars; but, finding it vain to ſtruggle with this Weſt Wind, which was before called favourable, he ſteers for Sicily. There is another unlucky circumſtance in this deſcription, which is, that while Palinurus points the *darkneſs* of the night in ſtrong terms, he conſults the *ſtars* for his diſtance from that Iſland.

HOMER'S GEOGRAPHY.

WE can produce no evidence of Homer's travels ſo ſatisfactory, as his extenſive geographical accuracy, a thorough examination of which we muſt reſerve for the enlarged plan of this work; for it would be impoſſible to give this article the conſideration it deſerves, without exceeding the bounds we propoſed to this Eſſay. His map of Greece alone would take a volume to do it juſtice, eſpecially as we followed Homer through that country, under the direction of Strabo, whoſe judicious commentary upon the geographical part of the Iliad and Odyſſey leaves us leſs reaſon to regret the loſs of twelve volumes of Apollodorus the Athenian (ſaid to have been the beſt of the Poet's geographical commentators) with twenty three of Menogenes

[e] Æn. iv. 562. "Nec Zephyros audis ſpirare ſecundos?"

[f] Here, from the firſt to the twenty-eighth line of the fifth book of the Æneid, ending with, "Flecte viam velis."

Menogenes, and the works of ſeveral other writers on this ſubject; among whom Demetrius of Scepſis, compoſed ſixty books on thirty lines of the catalogue; ſo diffuſive and extenſive an Illuſtration does not, I confeſs, give a favourable Idea of the work, but as an Apology for Demetrius (perhaps a compliment to Homer) I muſt obſerve that he lived within ſight of Troy, upon an elevated ſpot, which commands a view of the great Scene of Action, and of courſe, he might be more particularly intereſted in that minute accuracy of his Author which fell ſo much under his daily obſervation.

The reader will be leſs ſurpriſed at thoſe voluminous commentaries on the catalogue, if he conſiders how highly the authority of this venerable record was reſpected, even by the juriſprudence of thoſe times. In ſome cities it was by law enacted, that the youth ſhould learn the catalogue by heart. Solon the lawgiver, a Native of that Iſland, appealed to this code, in juſtification of the Athenian claim againſt the pretenſions of the Megareans, when the right to Salamis was ſo warmly conteſted by Athens and Megara, and the deciſion of that matter was at laſt referred to five Spartan Judges, who, on their part, admitted the nature of the evidence, by contending for a different reading more favourable to their claim. We find three other litigated caſes with regard to territorial property and dominion, which are ſaid to have been determined by reference to this original chart.

That Homer ſhould eſcape ſo entire, out of the hands of *Lawyers* and *Grammarians*, is a piece of good fortune to letters, which his friends have great reaſon to congratulate themſelves upon; for, conſidering how cruelly both his compoſitions and his country have been tortured by barbarous treatment of various kinds, and the changes they have undergone in ſo great a length of time, his deſcriptions correſpond more with preſent appearances, than could be reaſonably expected.

Not only the permanent and durable objects of his deſcription, ſuch as his rock, hill, dale, promontory, &c. continue in many inſtances to bear unqueſtionable teſtimony of his correctneſs, and ſhew, by the ſtrict propriety of his epithets, how faithfully they were copied; but even his more fading and changeable landſcape, his ſhady grove, verdant lawn, and flowery mead, his paſture and tillage, with all his varieties of corn, wine, and oil, agree ſurpriſingly with the preſent face of thoſe countries.

So remarkable a reſemblance between periods ſo diſtant from each other would induce us to believe, what is not otherwiſe improbable, that agriculture is pretty much in the ſame neglected ſtate, in that part of the world, at preſent, that it was in the Poet's time. I doubt much whether his deſcriptions of this kind could have ſo well ſtood the teſt of our examination, two thouſand years ago, in thoſe days of elegance and refinement, when nature was probably decked out in an artful ſtudied dreſs, very unlike the negligent diſhabille in which Homer and we found her.

But, I muſt own, great part of the amuſement we enjoyed, in Homer and Strabo's company, on the ſpot, aroſe as much from the inveſtigation, as the diſcovery of the correſpondence and reſemblance. Nor can I, for that reaſon, promiſe the ſame entertainment to the reader, ſhould I live to lay before him our further obſervations on this head; yet I hope my labour will not be entirely loſt, if I can raiſe the attention of the commentators and tranſlators of Homer, to a matter, which has, I think, been too negligently treated. I cannot, perhaps, more effectually point out the uſe of a more extenſive conſideration of this ſubject, than by ſhewing how much a neglect of it has been injurious to the Poet, to which I ſhall at preſent confine myſelf.

I chuſe to take the inſtances which I ſhall produce, for this purpoſe, from Mr. Pope's elegant tranſlation, rather than from others of leſs merit, becauſe I think they muſt have more weight, when collected from that quarter to which the Iliad and Odyſſey have the greateſt obligations; and, upon the whole, I believe it will be acknowledged, that of all the languages we know, in which Homer has hitherto appeared, it is in Engliſh alone that he continues to be a Poet.

While,

While, upon this occaſion, I ſhall take that liberty with Mr. Pope which a free enquiry demands, I ſhall not forget how much is due to ſo great an ornament of our country; nor am I inſenſible of the merit of his very poetical tranſlation. I could with pleaſure enlarge upon ſome of his improvements of the original, were the beauties of that work as much connected with my ſubject, as the ungrateful taſk of finding fault, in which I happen to be engaged: but, as the ſcope of this Eſſay is to vindicate the truth and conſiſtence of Homer's *Deſcription*, the tranſlation comes properly before us, only ſo far as it contradicts that character.

Now, though it muſt be acknowledged that Mr. Pope is the only tranſlator who has, in a certain degree, kept alive that divine ſpirit of the Poet, which has almoſt expired in other hands; yet I cannot help thinking, that thoſe who wiſh to be thoroughly acquainted, either with the *manners* and *characters* of Homer's age, or the *landſcape* and *geography* of his country, will be diſappointed, if they expect to find them in this tranſlation. Had Mr. Pope preſerved the firſt; viz. the *manners* and *characters*, Homer would have continued to ſpeak Greek to moſt of his Engliſh readers; for, though the diſguiſe of ſeveral paſſages in a modern dreſs, may ſometimes proceed from his not being very converſant with ancient life and manners; yet he often purpoſely accommodates his author to the ideas of thoſe for whom he tranſlates, ſubſtituting beauties of his own (as ſimilar as he can bring them to the original) in the room of thoſe which he deſpaired of making intelligible.

As to the landſcape and geography of the Iliad and Odyſſey, or that deſcriptive accuracy of Homer, which is the ſubject of this Eſſay, it lies within the reach of literal tranſlation only; nor can it be poetically conveyed, through a modern language, preſerving any tolerable ſhare of that elegant expreſſion and harmonious verſification, which characterize Mr. Pope's writings. While therefore he deſerves much praiſe for having done more than any other tranſlator, he deſerves no cenſure for not having done what it is impoſſible to accompliſh. But, in order to form a fair judgment on this matter, let us take a ſhort view of his tranſlation, as far as relates to this object; and firſt let us ſee how the catalogue has been treated in this reſpect.

Here we ſee the moſt unpoetical of all ſubjects, viz. mere arithmetical enumeration, or a liſt of names, enlivened with ſo much imagination, that it required no leſs than Mr. Pope's powers of numbers to preſerve any part of this original entertainment for his Engliſh readers. It is but juſtice to acknowledge, "That by rendering his verſification very flowing and muſi-"cal, and by making the whole appear as much like a landſcape or piece of painting as poſ-"ſible," he has done more to pleaſe both the ear and eye, than could be reaſonably expected out of *ſuch materials*, in *Engliſh* and in *rhyme*.

But as this could not be effected, even by Mr. Pope, without his "venturing to open the "proſpect a little, by the addition of a few epithets, or ſhort hints of deſcription;" ſo "the "moſt valuable piece of geography left us, concerning the ſtate of Greece in that early pe-"riod," has, of courſe, ſuffered by ſuch liberties[g]; and, when every deſcriptive epithet in Homer ſhould have been religiouſly preſerved, Mr. Pope's alterations have produced a new map of his own, and deprived us of that merit of the original which he called upon us to admire. Thus the *Græa and ſpacious Mycaleſſus* of Homer become by tranſlation,

"Græa *near the main*,
"And Mycaleſſia's *ample piny plain*.

Even had it been proper to deſcribe the *narrow ſtreight* of the Euripus, by the name of the *main*, yet it is not at all diſtinguiſhed, by ſuch a ſituation, from ſeveral other places mentioned on this ſhore; and as to the ample *piny plain*, we ſearched for it to no purpoſe. It is, therefore, matter of doubt, whether it exiſted in the time of Homer, though mentioned by Statius about a thouſand years after. Indeed it would be difficult to aſſign any reaſon for the addition in the Engliſh, except that the rhyme requires that Græa ſhould be *near the main* in the c

[g] See Pope's obſervations on the Catalogue.

the firſt line, and that Mycaleſſia (for ſo the tranſlator was obliged to write it in order to make out the line) owes both to rhyme and meaſure her *piny plain* in the ſecond.

When the additional epithets of the tranſlator are deſcriptive of ſome permanent circumſtance, as in thoſe lines;

" From *high* Trœzene and Maſeta's *plain*,
" And fair Ægina, circled by the *main*;"

the deſcription (though not Homer's, and merely introduced to help out the rhyme and meaſure) has probably been always true; but when, unauthoriſed, he enriches the picture with the fluctuating and tranſitory circumſtances of huſbandry, it is leſs excuſable. Thus when he informs us that the following two places were famous

" For *flocks* Erythræ, Gliſſa for the *vine*;"

and mentions thoſe

" Who *plow* the ſpacious Orchomenian *plain*;"

he ſubſtitutes the ſtate of thoſe countries in the time of Plutarch and Statius, (his authorities) for what it might have been in that of Homer, who connects no ſuch ideas of *paſture*, *vintage*, and *corn*, with thoſe names.

In ſhort, thoſe conciſe, but deſcriptive, therefore intereſting, ſketches of antient arts, cuſtoms, and manners, with which Homer has enlivened his map of Greece, cannot be tranſlated faithfully, and at the ſame time poetically. Mr. Pope has ſucceeded ſurpriſingly in the latter; but then his ſtudy of a flowing and muſical verſification frequently betrays him into a florid profuſion of unmeaning ornament, in which the object is greatly diſguiſed, if not totally abſorbed; as when, for the graſſy Pteleon of Homer, we have,

" And graſſy Pteleon *deck'd with chearful greens*,
" *The bow'rs of Ceres, and the ſylvan ſcenes.*"

In the ſame manner is the ſingle epithet, *noble*, which Homer gives the Cephyſſus treated:

" From thoſe rich regions, where Cephyſſus leads
" His ſilver current thro' the flow'ry meads."

But he is ſtill more laviſh of ornament, when he dreſſes up the *Peneus* and *leafy Pelion* of Homer in as much additional finery as can be well crowded into four lines:

" Who dwell where Pelion, crown'd with piny boughs,
" Obſcures the glade, and nods his ſhaggy brows;
" Or where thro' flow'ry Tempe Peneus ſtray'd,
" The region ſtretch'd beneath his mighty ſhade."

Here the Tranſlator gives us a landſcape, not without its beauties; but beauties ſo much his own, that they retain little of Homer, either in matter or manner.

We ſhall ſay no more at preſent of the catalogue, where Rhætor is *green*, Lilæa *fair*, and Cynos *rich*, without any authority from the original; Anemonia has her *ſtately ſhining turrets*, and Corinth her *imperial Towers*, Parrhaſia her *ſnowy cliffs*, Tarphe her *Sylvan Seats*, and Ætylus her *low Walls*, from Pope, not from Homer.

Hence

Hence it comes to paſs, that the old Poet is loaded with Engliſh ambiguity, and ſometimes contradiction, for which there is no foundation in the Greek; as where Ithaca is ſometimes *fair*, and ſometimes *barren*, and where, in ſpite of the *ſandy* coaſt of Pylos in one place, we have, in another,

" Alpheus' *plenteous* ſtream, that yields
" Increaſe of *harveſt* to the Pylian *fields*."

Beſides thoſe unſurmountable difficulties which every poetical Tranſlator of Homer has to encounter, when we conſider (what it is our great object at preſent to point out) that the Greek Poet ever copied after nature and reality, forming, as far as his obſervation carried him, clear ideas of whatever he intended to repreſent, we ſee how this original method of collecting his materials produces a conſiſtent whole out of correſponding parts, every object of deſcription recurring, though in a new light, yet always agreeable to his firſt conception of it; and when, on the other hand, we conſider that none of his commentators, ſince the time of Strabo, have been at the pains of forming to themſelves any diſtinct idea of his geography; it is not ſurprizing, that, when they loſe ſight of the original, they ſhould be inconſiſtent, not only with truth, but with themſelves.

However, the Tranſlator's repreſentation of the ſame ſcene of action under different appearances, in different parts of the poem, as it falls leſs under obſervation, ſo it is more excuſeable than when he gives a contrary deſcription of the ſame ſpot within the compaſs of a few lines; as where we ſee

" The great Achilles ſtretch'd along the ſhore,
" Where, daſh'd on *rocks*, the broken billows roar;"

Though, in three lines after,

" Along the *graſs* his languid members fall:"

And yet, after all, the ſame deſcription which puts him to ſleep, both on the *rocks* and on the *graſs*, awakes him;

" Starting from the *ſands*."

Should we give this ſleeping Achilles to a painter, he muſt be ſtrangely puzzled with the Hero's *rocky*, *graſſy*, *ſandy* couch; a ſort of prevarication (if I may uſe that expreſſion) impracticable upon canvaſs.

Thus while the Poet, by judiciouſly ſelecting the mere characterizing circumſtances of the object he deſcribes, leaves us fully impreſſed with truth and reality, his Tranſlator, perhaps over-ſtudious of embelliſhment, wanders into inconſiſtence in ſearch of it: nay, ſometimes into flat contradiction; as when, in the ſame picture of the ſea, in one line it is,

" The *foaming* flood;"

and in the next,

" The *level* ſurface of the deep."

Much of this is, no doubt, owing to that unhappy reſtraint of Engliſh rhyme, which ſo unworthily engroſſes his thoughts, that he not only frequently loſes ſight of his author, but is ſometimes even diverted from his own juſt ſenſe of his beauties, and betrayed into an unfaithful tranſlation of what he perfectly well underſtood. Of this diſtracted attention we find a ridiculous effect in that paſſage of the Iliad which expreſſes Hector's eagerneſs to retrieve the

honour of his brother Paris, who had propoſed to decide the war by ſingle combat with Menelaus: the ſpirit of the original is as juſtly conceived in Mr. Pope's Note, as it is unhappily miſrepreſented in his Tranſlation; and both together produce the following contradictory medley; "Hector ſtays not to reply to his brother, but *runs away* with the challenge *immediately*, *with* "*ſteps majeſtically ſlow*."

When thoſe diſcordant pictures of the ſame object are thus cloſely confronted, the falling off is ſo ſtriking, that we muſt, in candor, ſuppoſe it the work of different hands negligently reviſed.

It is impoſſible to account, in any other way, for ſome of the inaccuracies of the Map of Troy prefixed to the Engliſh tranſlation. So capital an error as that of diſcharging the Scamander into the Ægean ſea, inſtead of the Helleſpont, is a ſtriking ſpecimen of the careleſs and ſuperficial manner in which this matter has been treated. Yet this miſtake, material as it is, does not ſeem to miſlead the Tranſlator in other reſpects: for he is as inconſiſtent with his own incorrect map, as both he and his map are with the real ſituation of the ground; and, by not having aſcercertained any invariable and fixed idea of the ſcene of action, either true or falſe, he has led his Author into a labyrinth of contradiction, out of which no imaginable diſpoſition of the ſcene can extricate him.

Thus, when he ſuppoſes the Greeks had not paſſed the river before the beginning of the ſixth book, it is a neceſſary conſequence of ſuch a ſuppoſition, that they were, till then, at ſome miles diſtance from Troy. But this is entirely inconſiſtent with that beautiful digreſſion of the third book, where Priam and Helen ſee the Grecian leaders ſo diſtinctly from the walls of that city, as to deſcribe, not only their perſons, but their features.

In ſhort, this map would not deſerve the few lines we beſtow upon it, were it not for the reſpectable name of Pope, who, no doubt, truſted this inferior part of his work to unſkilful or negligent hands. I was at a loſs to account for ſo much obvious inaccuracy, collected into ſo ſmall a compaſs, till I diſcovered, beſides the miſtakes of the draughtſman, a certain method and regularity of error, which could belong to the Engraver alone, who, by a piece of negligence, not leſs unpardonable in the artiſt than fatal to Geography and Homer, has given a map, which reverſes the drawing from which it was engraved, and of courſe changes the reſpective ſituation of all the parts, from right to left, and from left to right; ſo that the Sigeum ſtands where the Rhœteum ſhould be, and the Scamander runs on that Side of Troy which belongs to the Simois.

How ſo material an overſight ſhould have remained hitherto unnoticed, or how Mr. Pope could contrive to explain his own reverſed map, is not to our preſent purpoſe: to ſay more on this head, is needleſs; to have ſaid thus much, on the only map which has hitherto attempted to illuſtrate the principal ſcene of the action of the Iliad, was unavoidable.

It has been already obſerved, that while places diſtant from Ionia are marked more diſtinctly, as objects of curioſity, the ſame attention has not been paid to thoſe in the Poet's neighbourhood. Though we find him thoroughly acquainted with the environs of Troy, they are introduced leſs upon their own account, than as circumſtances connected with the action. This I take to be a principal reaſon, why the correctneſs of his map of the Troade, opening thus gradually with the ſtory, has hitherto eſcaped particular obſervation, and has been taken for granted, upon ſlight examination. It is ſcarce to be expected, that a Tranſlator of Mr. Pope's taſte could, in the midſt of the poetical beauties of the Iliad, ſubmit to a dull, patient attention to its mere topographical accuracy.

But I ſhall not trouble the reader further on this head, it being my object, not to condemn the Tranſlation, but to juſtify the Original; where we do not diſcover, even in the boldeſt flights of fancy, that careleſs contradiction of circumſtances, which hiſtory, poetry, and romance, equally diſclaim. The Poet, who makes tripods walk, and horſes ſpeak, does not, like Dacier, bring the Greeks to entrenchments before they were made; nor, like Pope, launch a veſſel that is already afloat.

But in vain do we attempt to ſupport Homer's character as a Geographer, unleſs we can reſcue him from certain ſevere imputations of inaccuracy on this head, which have gained too much credit by remaining ſo long unanſwered. The accuſation of this ſort, which appears to have made the moſt dangerous impreſſions, relates to the diſtance he places the iſle of Pharos from Egypt. It ſeems incumbent on me to attempt the Poet's vindication, againſt a charge which has ſo materially affected his geographical reputation, that he has, in this inſtance, been abandoned even by ſome of his beſt friends.

The lines which have given occaſion to ſo much cenſure, are thoſe of the fourth book of the Odyſſey, where Menelaus, relating to Telemachus his adventures, deſcribes Pharos as ſituated a day's ſail diſtant from Egypt [h]; thoſe who ſaw this iſland not a mile from Alexandria, made ſtrong objections to the accuracy of the Poet's Geography: his friends could not help acknowledging that the diſtance at which he placed that Iſland did not correſpond with the apparent ſtate of things in their time; but ſome of them diſcovered, in this want of correſpondence, a new proof of his extenſive obſervation and exactneſs. Homer, ſay they, was well acquainted with the conſtant acceſſion of land to the Delta, by means of the Nile, which muſt have gradually diminiſhed the diſtance between Pharos and Egypt; and he made allowance for the effects of this operation, from the time of Menelaus, with a view to accommodate his deſcription to the period of the Trojan war.

Such was the ſtate of this diſpute in the times of the Ptolemies and Cæſars; with how little advantage either to the Poet or his readers, it has been ſince carried on, may be ſeen in the annexed note [i]. It is not from books, but from the face of the countries which Homer deſcribes, that I can

[h] Νήσῳ ἐπὶ πρόσθε τις εἶσι πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ
Αἰγύπτῳ ἀντιπέρηθε, Φάρον δὲ ἑκάλεσσαν,
Τόσσον ἀπὸ νηυσίν, ὅσσον τε διαμπερὲς ἠλιάσειε
Ἠνοπίη, ἢ λιγὺς ἀὴρ ἐπιπνείησιν ὄπισθεν. Od. iv. 354.

" High o'er a gulphy ſea, the *Pharian* iſle
" Fronts the deep roar of diſemboguing *Nile:*
" Her diſtance from the ſhore, the courſe begun
" At dawn, and ending with the ſetting ſun,
" A gally meaſures; when the ſtiffer gales
" Riſe on the poop, and fully ſtretch the ſails."

" [i] Ægyptum plerique volunt Nili fluminis invectu paulatim eſſe aggeſtam. Proinde illam Ephorus appellat πολυποχωτον; Herodotus πτιλιθλον γην, & δωρον του πολαμου; Philoſophus του πολαμου εργον, atque ex eo ipſo Æthiopes ſeſe Ægyptiis antiquiores eſſe probabant, quod cùm Ægyptus olim fuiſſet mare, tandem του Νειλου καλα τας αποβασεις την εκ της Αιθιοπιας ιλυν καλαφερουντος, *Nilo per exceſſus ſuos limum ex Æthiopia afferente*, facta eſſet terra continens. Cui rei probandæ multa afferunt. Primò quoties Nilus exundat limi alluvionibus cedere pelagus, & removeri nonnihil. 2. In Ægypti montibus conchylia reperiri. 3. Puteos & fontes, quotquot ſunt, ſalſam habere & amaram aquam, ac ſi reliquiæ maris in iis ſubſederint. 4. Denique ad Pharum inſulam, hodiè ſolùm ſeptem ſtadiis, aut ad ſummum mille paſſibus, ab Alexandria diſparatam; Homeri ævo noctis & diei curſu ab Ægypto diſtaſſe; ut idem teſtatur, Odyſſ. lib. iv. ver. 356.

" Conſtat tamen Ægyptum ſemper in eodem fuiſſe ſitu. Nam, ut cætera taceam, Tanis Ægypti olim Regia non procul à Tanitico Nili oſtio jam extabat tempore Moſis, qui *mirabilia fecit in terra Ægypti in campo Taneos*, Pſal. lxxviii. 12. Quin antiquiſſima urbs Hebron, in qua decimus à Diluvio Abraam diu vixit, Gen. xiii. 18. & xxiii. 2. nonniſi ſeptennio ante Tanim ſuit condita, Num. xiii. 23. Itaque fabularis hiſtoria Iſidis, & Ori, & Oſiridis, quâ nihil antiquius habent Ægyptii, multorum meminit locorum in infima Ægypto; ut quæ illo ævo jam extiterint. Sic in Plutarcho de Iſide, Oſiridem legas arcâ incluſum in mare fuiſſe dejectum, " δια του Τανιτικου στοματος, *per Nili oſtium Taniticum*, & poſtmodum Buſiride ſepultum, aut, ut alii

" volunt,

can hope to do him juſtice. Having, with that view, twice made this voyage of Menelaus, with the Odyſſey in my hands, I was ſatisfied, that the Poet's account of its length and danger was agreeable

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" volunt, Taphoſiride : & Orum Buti educatum : & Peluſium oppidum ab Iſide conditum. Sed &
" Trojanis temporibus creditur Menelaus Canobum appuliſſe ; unde Pharus aberat ſolùm centum &
" viginti ſtadiis. Itaque falſiſſimum eſt quod ab Homero traditur, à Pharo in Ægyptum noctis &
" diei curſum fuiſſe, adeóque curſum navis :

" ——ἠ λιγυς ὑρῳ επιπνειησιν οπισθεν,
" ——*ſtridens quam ventus pone ſequatur.*

" Navis enim integrum diem vento ſecundo procedens, eoque ſtridente & acri, iter emetitur decuplo
" longius, id eſt, pro centum & viginti ſtadiis ſtadia mille & ducenta. Id lectorem malo doceri
" Ariſtidis verbis in Oratione Ægyptiaca : Καινῷ Φαρῳ σταδιους εικοσι και ικαλον απιχει, καιτοι ναυς
" ταυτμιρια θεουσα, ὑπ' ανεμῳ καλα πρυμναν αντιοῦῳ, προσθησω δε και λιγεως, ὡς εικοσι και ικαλον σα-
" διους ανυσει, μαλιστα αλλ' ισως μαλλον διακοσιως και χιλιους. Sed nec Ægypto quicquam ex Nili
" alluvionibus accedere conceſſerim. Id enim quicquid eſt facilè diſſipat continua maris agitatio.
" Proinde cùm Alexandria ſtet ab annis ferè bis mille, tamen ſemper eſt littorea, & quantùm à
" Pharo diſtabat olim, tantùm, hodiéque diſtat, nempe ſtadia ſeptem, aut, ut alii, mille paſſus.
" Ariſtides ubi ſupra ; Καιτοι της μεν ηπειρου απιχει Φαρος ικα μαλιστα σταδιους. Ammianus lib. xxii.
" *Inſula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocarum gregibus diverſatum Homerus fabulatur inflatius, a civita-*
" *tis littore mille paſſibus diſparata.*" BOCHART.

" Homere étoit trop ſavant en Geographie pour ne pas ſavoir que de ſon tems l'Iſle du Phare
" n'étoit éloignée de l'embouchure de Conope que de ſix vingts ſtades, mais comme il avoit ouï
" dire que le Nil, à force de traîner du ſable & du limon, avoit par ſucceſſion de tems beaucoup
" augmenté le Continent par ſes alluvions, il a voulu faire croire qu'anciennement & du tems de
" Menelas cette Iſle étoit plus éloignée de la terre & plus avant dans la mer ; il a même tellement
" exageré cette diſtance qu'il a dit qu'elle étoit tout ce que pouvoit faire de chemin en un jour un
" vaiſſeau & par un bon vent, c'eſt à dire, qu'il la fait dix ou douze fois plus grande qu'elle n'eſt ;
" car un vaiſſeau peut faire en un jour & une nuit quatorze ou quinze cens ſtades quand il a le vent
" bon. Homere, pour rendre ſa narration plus merveilleuſe, a donc déguiſé la verité, en s'accom-
" modant à ce qu'il avoit ouï dire des embouchures du Nil & de ſes alluvions. Jamais cette Iſle
" n'a été plus éloignée du Continent qu'elle l'eſt aujourd'hui, & en voici une preuve bien certaine,
" c'eſt que ſi elle eût été éloignée du Continent de quatorze cens ſtades du tems de Menelas, &
" qu'en deux cens cinquante ou ſoixante ans qu'il y a du tems de Menelas au tems d'Homere, elle
" s'en fût rapprochée juſqu'à ſix-vingts, les alluvions auroient augmenté le Continent de douze
" cens quatre vingts ſtades dans cet eſpace de tems ; & par cette raiſon, depuis Homere juſqu'à
" nous, le Continent auroit été ſi fort pouſſe, que cette Iſle du Phare ſe trouveroit aujourd'hui bien
" éloignée de la mer. Il n'eſt pas même poſſible, comme l'a fort bien remarqué Bochart, que le
" Nil ait jamais augmenté le Continent par ſes alluvions, car l'agitation de la mer auroit toûjours
" diſſipé plus de ſable & plus de limon que le fleuve n'auroit pû en apporter. Et le même Bochart
" le prouve par un fait qui eſt ſans replique. C'eſt que cette Iſle du Phare n'eſt éloignée que de ſept
" ſtades, ou huit cens ſoixante & quinze pas d'Alexandrie, qui eſt vis-à-vis ſur le rivage de la mer
" à une embouchure du Nil, & cette diſtance eſt aujourd'hui la même qu'elle étoit il y a deux mille
" ans ; le Nil n'a pas augmenté le Continent d'un pouce. Ce n'eſt donc point par ignorance
" qu'Homere a péché, mais il s'eſt accommodé à un bruit commun, & il a beaucoup augmenté
" certe diſtance, τῳ μυθωδες χαριν, *pour la fable*, comme dit Strabon dans ſon 1 Liv." DACIER.

" This deſcription of *Pharos* has given great trouble to the Critics and Geographers ; it is ge-
" nerally concluded, that the diſtance of *Pharos* is about ſeven ſtadia from *Alexandria*. *Am-*
" *mianus Marcellinus* mentions this very paſſage thus ; *l.* 22. *Inſula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phoca-*
" *rum gregibus diverſatum Homerus fabulatur inflatius, a civitatis littore mille paſſibus diſparata*,
" or, *about a mile diſtant from the ſhores*. How then comes *Homer* to affirm it to be diſtant a full
" day's ſail? *Dacier* anſwers, that *Homer* might have heard that the *Nile*, continually bringing
" down much earthy ſubſtance, had enlarged the continent : and knowing it not to be ſo diſtant
" in his time, took the liberty of a Poet, and deſcribed it as ſtill more diſtant in the days of *Me-*
" *nelaus*.

agreeable to appearances when he wrote; and that this paſſage has been miſunderſtood, for want of due attention to the changes which have happened, both in the *nature* and *names* of things, in that part of the world, ſince the building of Alexandria. A proper conſideration of this matter will, perhaps, ſhew that a voyage from Pharos to Egypt, before and after that epoch, or in the time of Menelaus and that of the Ptolemies, conveyed ideas of different courſes and different diſtances.

In order to lay more diſtinctly before the reader the reaſons upon which I ground this opinion, I beg leave to refer him to the two annexed maps of the coaſt of Egypt.

The firſt map repreſents the ſtate of that country in the heroic age, when Pharos was, undoubtedly at a greater diſtance from Egypt than in later times, as well becauſe of the antient contracted ſtate of Delta, as becauſe the coaſt, cloſe upon which Pharos was ſituated, and to which it is ſince joined, did not at that time belong to Egypt, but was at a conſiderable diſtance from it in the Libyan Deſert.

The ſecond Map is accommodated to the age of the Ptolemies, when Pharos was within a few hundred yards of the Capital of that country, and formed the harbour of Alexandria.

It does not give the moſt favourable idea either of the taſte or wiſdom of the ancient Egyptian Kings, that they ſhould execute thoſe ſtupendous, may I, without offence to other Travellers add, barbarous monuments of Vanity, the Pyramids, and yet leave it to the Greeks to bring the Nile to Alexandria, and give Egypt a commodious harbour. The conſequences of ſupplying this ſpot with water, and, by that means, making it habitable, were certain; the trade and riches of the world centered here; and Alexandria, being the great Channel and principal Mart for India commodities, became ſoon the moſt populous and magnificent city then known. It ſeems not to have occurred to the Greek or Roman writers, who are full of encomiums on the ſplendor of this new Capital, that the ground upon which it ſtood was, not long before, too inſignificant to deſerve a boundary, or to be claimed by any country. That ſuch was the ſtate of this coaſt in Homer's days, is beyond doubt; it made no part of Egypt at that time, when the extent of the inundation of the Nile marked the natural limits of that country. How much its connection with this ſpot was the artificial work of a more commercial age, is obvious to every traveller at this day; for the preſent inhabitants of Alexandria ſubſiſt entirely upon the annual ſupply of water, which the ancient Canal ſtill continues to convey from the Nile to that city; and they are totally ſeparated from the cultivated ſoil of Egypt by a barren deſert, through which the travellers road to Roſetta is pointed out by a range of poſts, fixed in the ſand for that purpoſe.

Bu

" *nelaus*. But *Dacier* never ſees a miſtake in *Homer*. Had his Poetry been worſe if he had de-
" ſcribed the real diſtance of *Pharos*? It is allowable in a Poet to diſguiſe the truth, to adorn his
" ſtory; but what ornament has he given his Poetry by this enlargement? *Bochart* has fully proved
" that there is no acceſſion to the Continent from any ſubſtance that the *Nile* brings down with it:
" the violent agitation of the ſeas prohibit it from lodging, and forming itſelf into ſolidity.
" *Eratoſthenes* is of opinion, that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile:* but *Strabo* anſwers,
" that his ſilence about them is not an argument of his ignorance, for neither has he ever mentioned
" where he was born. But *Strabo* does not enter fully into the meaning of *Eratoſthenes: Era-*
" *toſthenes* does not mean that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile* from his ſilence, but be-
" cauſe he places *Pharos* at the diſtance of a whole day's ſail from the Continent. The only way
" to unite this inconſiſtence is to ſuppoſe, that the Poet intended to ſpecify the *Peluſiac* mouth of
" the *Nile*, from which *Pharos* ſtands about a day's ſail: but this is ſubmitted to the Critics." POPE.

" The *Greek* Hiſtorians have been all condemned by *Bochart*, a Man of very great Learning,
" for aſſerting, that the lower *Egypt* was a Plain made out by the continual Congeſtion of the
" Slime which their wonderful River ſwept along in its courſe thro' *Ethiopia* and the high Coun-
" try. He has likewiſe chaſtiſed *Homer*, who favours that opinion, in his account of the Diſ-
" tance of the *Pharos* from the Land." *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*.

But though inattention to the very different appearance of things on this coaſt before and after the building of Alexandria, might miſlead ſome ancient writers with regard to the ſenſe of this paſſage, I wonder the words of the Poet did not ſecure his meaning; as they expreſsly point out the voyage of Menelaus, not from Pharos to Egypt, (which, after Alexandria became the Capital of that country, might have been equivocal), but from Pharos to the Nile, or, as he calls it, the river Ægyptus.

Having thus far extended the voyage of Menelaus, by conſidering the coaſt where Alexandria was afterwards built, in the light that it muſt, no doubt, have appeared to him, let us ſee how much nearer we can bring it to the Poet's deſcription, by inquiring into the probable ſtate of the Delta about the time he wrote.

The acceſſion made to the Delta, by the mud which the Nile depoſits in the ſea, is ſo plain a matter of fact, that it could not eſcape the obſervation of thoſe who have ſeen and conſidered that country with the leaſt degree of attention; nor ſhould I take up a moment of the Reader's time, to prove what has had the uniform teſtimony of travellers for ſo many ages, had not the learned Bochart taken it into his head to deny that any ſuch acceſſion is made to this coaſt, and had not Mr. Pope, Madam Dacier, and others, implicitly ſubſcribed to that opinion.

We ſhall find that this error (with others which the commentators on this paſſage have been led into) aroſe from an indiſcriminate application of ſome obſervations to the whole coaſt of Egypt, which are true only with regard to one part of it, and from confounding appearances on the coaſt of Delta with thoſe on that of Alexandria, which are totally diſſimilar.

The coaſt of Alexandria is ſo far from being ſenſible of any acceſſion by means of the Nile, that the ſea encroaches upon ſome parts of it, in ſpite of all the care which has been, and is ſtill, taken to keep it out. I have ſeen the inhabitants much alarmed at the danger of its breaking into their reſervoirs of freſh water; for, ſhould either the ancient ciſterns of that city, which remain yet ſufficiently entire, or the canal which ſtill continues, as regularly as the Nile overflows, to convey to them their annual and only ſupply of freſh water, by any accident fail, this ſpot muſt be abandoned, and would again become no more a part of Egypt than it was in the time of Homer or Menelaus.

The very reverſe of this is ſo certain with regard to the ſea-coaſt of Delta, that I will venture to ſay, it is evident to the ſlighteſt obſervation on the ſpot; nor has it been denied by any traveller that I know, from Herodotus to the preſent times. It is impoſſible to look down upon this ſingular country, from the top of the great pyramid, and view this narrow ſtripe of the moſt luxuriant vegetation imaginable, hemmed in on each ſide by the extenſive parched deſerts of Libya and Arabia; but ſo accurately divided from them, that the extremes of ſterility and fertility unite without intermixing, and, though contiguous, are ſo diſtinct, that a line parallel to the courſe of the river ſeparates the richeſt verdure from the moſt barren ſand; I ſay, it is impoſſible to view this ſtriking contraſt, without inclining to the old opinion, that *Egypt is the gift of the Nile.*

But a more particular examination of this matter puts it out of diſpute: the ſoil is evidently the ſame with the mud brought down by the Nile, and entirely different from the native ſand of this country; it extends on each ſide as far as the Nile overflows, and no farther; its perpendicular depth from the ſurface diminiſhes, in proportion to its diſtance from the river; nor is its lateral encroachment upon the Arabian and Libyan deſerts more evident, than its gaining upon the ſea, as the following facts ſhew: thoſe who ſail for the coaſt of Delta get into the diſcoloured water of the Nile before they ſee land, and, by heaving the lead, they find the bottom covered with its mud, part of which ſubſides, and grows fixed, notwithſtanding the agitation of the ſea. Damiata, which was a ſea-port in the time of St. Louis of France, a little more than five hundred years ſince, is at preſent above five miles from the mouth of the river: the ſame increaſe is obſervable on the weſtern branch; Foua, which was the port on that ſide, even ſince the Venetians had the monopoly of this trade,

trade, is now ſeveral leagues from the ſea. All the old men of Damiata and Roſetta agree in remarking an acceſſion of above a mile within fifty years; and I thought I could perceive a ſenſible, though a ſmall alteration, between the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and forty-three, when I was firſt in Egypt, and one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty-one, when I made a ſecond voyage to that country.

If we ſuppoſe the acceſſion to the ſea-coaſt of Delta to have been always in the proportion to the laſt years, which, we know, has produced an increaſe of about miles, it will add about miles to the voyage of Menelaus; but, if we take into conſideration ſome circumſtances neceſſary towards forming a juſt opinion of this matter, we ſhall find the increaſe to have been much ſtronger.

Firſt, While Lower Egypt was a deep bay, ſheltered by two promontories, the mud brought down by the Nile muſt have been leſs diſſipated by the agitation of the ſea, and muſt of courſe have occaſioned a quicker acceſſion of land to the Delta, than has been produced ſince it has been more expoſed to the motion of the ſea, and leſs defended from the winds: We may conclude from this, that for the future this operation of the Nile will be much retarded; and, after a certain projection of the Delta beyond the promontories, it muſt entirely ceaſe.

Secondly, Thoſe who ſail upon the coaſt of Delta diſcover ſome ſmall ſand hills, formerly iſlands, but now included in the Delta; ſuch a barrier at the mouth of the bay, which formerly exiſted here, muſt have contributed greatly to the accumulation of that mud of which the Delta is formed.

Thirdly, If, independent of every other conſideration, we attend to the triangular form of the Delta, and the manner of its increaſe, it is plain that its progreſs muſt become ſlower, as its baſe, or north ſide, grows wider; and that the ſame quantity of mud, or ſlime, which has produced an acceſſion of above twelve miles in the laſt five hundred years, muſt have had a greater effect in the ſame time, in proportion as the baſe was narrower.

Upon the whole of this reaſoning, it muſt appear doubtful, whether any part of Lower Egypt exiſted in the Poet's time; but, ſuppoſing the ſouth angle of Delta to have been then formed, its diſtance from Pharos would make above fifty leagues, which may be called a day's ſail, agreeable to the general proportion which Homer obſerves between time and diſtance in his navigation.

Having ſo far endeavoured to vindicate the Poet, as to the length of this voyage, it may not be improper, while this ſubject is before us, to ſay ſomething of its difficulty and danger, which Menelaus mentions with much dread and anxiety. As ſome account of the navigation of this coaſt will furniſh the beſt comment on this part of the Poet's deſcription, I ſhall lay before the Reader a narrative of what fell within my own obſervation relative to this matter.

I ſailed, in the morning of the fifth of February, one thouſand ſeven hundred and forty-three, from Latichea in Syria, for Damiata in Egypt, in a French ſhip laden with tobacco for that port: we loſt ſight of mount Libanus, the higheſt land on the Syrian coaſt, the ſame evening, and had a fair view of Cyprus next morning: after a happy navigation, with a favourable gale, we got into ſoundings on the coaſt of Egypt towards the evening on the third day, and found a ſlimy bottom in fathom water, at diſtance from the *Bogas*; ſo the Arabs call the mouth of the river, or rather the bar, or ridge of ſand and ſlime, which runs acroſs the mouth of both the eaſtern and weſtern branches of the Nile, and is formed by the oppoſition which the ſea makes to the current, ſhifting its poſition, and changing its ſhape and ſize according to the wind.

Here the ſea began to be diſcoloured with the water of the Nile, and, in another league, as I looked from the round-top of the main maſt, the freſh water appeared like an immenſe muddy pond, as diſtinct in colour from the ſea as the Soane is from the Rhone immediately after the junction of thoſe rivers below Lyons, and extending circularly near three leagues from the

the mouth of the Nile. The river was, at this ſeaſon, within its banks; but I was told, that the ſemicircle of freſh water is much more extended when the Nile overflows Egypt, and that its mixture with the ſea is diſcoverable fifteen or even twenty leagues from ſhore. I ſhould think this account exaggerated by ſeamen.

Here we diſcovered ſome veſſels at anchor in the road to Damiata; we next got ſight of the tops of ſome palm-trees and buildings, and laſt of all ſaw the low flat land of Egypt, when we were within leſs than a league of it, looking exactly like the loweſt parts of the Dutch coaſt. Such are the preſent appearances; and ſuch, in general, are thoſe which may be collected from Herodotus, whoſe remarks on the face of this country ſeem to entitle him to more credit than he has met with, when he ſpeaks from his own knowledge, and as an eye-witneſs.

There being no port on the coaſt of the Delta, ſhips anchor in an open road, till their buſineſs is done, expoſed to much danger, when the wind blows hard upon that harbourleſs ſhore; they are therefore ready to ſlip their cables, and run to ſea for ſecurity, upon the firſt appearance of foul weather.

We had ſcarce let go our anchor, in company with a Raguſean bound to the ſame port, when it began to thunder and lighten, and the wind, ſuddenly ſhifting to the north-weſt, blew a perfect hurricane. Night approaching, our immediate object was to get as well as we could off the coaſt, upon which there is no harbour from Alexandria to Mount Carmel. After a violent ſtorm of three days, we made Cyprus, and got into Limiſſo, where we were detained three weeks by very blowing weather. We ſailed again for Egypt the thirtieth, and in two days arrived upon that coaſt.

After the ſame ſucceſſion of appearances ſimilar to thoſe already deſcribed, we got to our anchoring ground, before the Bogas, in doubtful weather. However, a *germe* (a very ſtrong built boat of this country, entirely calculated to reſiſt the Bogas), tempted by a reward which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed for the firſt boat that ventures over upon ſuch occaſions, ſoon boarded us; but, by this time, things wore ſo gloomy an aſpect, that our captain was preparing, in all haſte, to run to ſea. To ſhare his fate, or to riſk the *Bogas*, was a point that called for immediate deciſion, for neither the germe or our veſſel could ſtay a moment: I choſe the latter.

It is not eaſy to imagine any thing more awful than the approach to this Bogas in ſtormy weather; the breakers, which were heard and ſeen at ſome diſtance, had now the appearance of a ſucceſſion of caſcades, which we were to paſs through for above half a mile. If the moſt ſtriking and expreſſive reſemblance of a picture to that appearance in nature which it attempts to repreſent is a ſufficient proof of the painter's having ſeen the original, we may conclude, from three [k] lines in the Iliad, that Homer had been in Egypt, and paſſed this Bogas. One of our boatmen got up to the maſt-head; and, as his voice could not be heard, directed our courſe by repeating ſignals, which he received from a boat within the Bogas, ſtationed there to pilot germes through the breakers on the bar, in blowing weather. We ſtruck thrice before we got into ſmooth water; and had the mortification to paſs the wreck of our unfortunate Raguſean fellow-traveller, who had not been able to get off the coaſt, and periſhed with his crew upon this bar.

There

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[k] Ὡς δ' ὁτ' επι προχοῃσι διϊπετεος ποταμοιο
Βεβρυχεν μεγα κυμα ποτι ροον. Αμφι δε τ' ακραι
Ηιονες ΒΟΟΩΣΙΝ, ερευγομενης ἁλος εξω.
Τοσση αρα Τρωων ιαχη γενετ'.

Theſe lines are ſaid to have determined Solon and Plato to abandon Poetry, deſpairing of ever being able to produce any thing like them; to thoſe who admire the art of making the ſound an echo to the ſenſe, they certainly offer beauties which are beyond all tranſlation.

There is a proverbial expreſſion uſed by the Arab ſailors, and adopted by the Franks who frequent thoſe ſeas, that *he who fears not the Bogas fears not the Devil.* Indeed the preſent ſtate of this coaſt ſeems to juſtify the extreme reluctance which Menelaus expreſſes at undertaking this voyage a ſecond time; eſpecially if we conſider the greater diſtance he had to run, in his own ſhips, without boats calculated for the Bogas, or ſeamen experienced in its navigation. We may add, that the coaſt of Egypt, which is now tolerably ſtraight, formed a deep bay in his time, which muſt have added to the danger, as it was more difficult for a ſhip to diſengage itſelf from the land.

I flatter myſelf that this account of the antient and preſent ſtate of the coaſt of Egypt will juſtify Homer's account of the *length* and *danger* of Menelaus's voyage, and vindicate him from the charge of ignorance on this head, under which he has ſo long laboured.

HOMER'S RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY.

WE cannot well take into conſideration Homer's *Religion* and *Mythology*, without ſome notice of his *Allegory*, which has opened ſo large a field for ſpeculation. It would be needleſs to enter into the extravagant fancies and laboured conjectures, by which the ſenſe of the plaineſt paſſages in the Iliad and Odyſſey has been ſacrificed to this *allegorizing humour*. Nothing can be more contrary to our idea of the character of his writings, and to that unbiaſſed attention to the forms of Nature which we admire as his diſtinguiſhing excellence. I do not, indeed, think that thoſe who read him with reliſh, and not from affectation, run any riſk of falling into ſuch refinement; however, as great pains have been taken to trace the *myſterious knowledge*, which the Poet is ſuppoſed to conceal under this dark *allegorical veil*, up to his *Egyptian education*, and as a late ingenious Writer[l] has attempted to ſhew the extenſive effects of the Poet's travelling from a country where nature governed, to one of ſettled rules and a digeſted policy, it may be worth while to take the beſt view we can of the ſtate of Learning in Greece and Egypt in Homer's time, in order to ſee what foundation there is for this opinion.

Referring the Reader, for the ſtate of Homer's learning, to a particular ſection on that head, I ſhall now lay before him my reaſons for thinking that the high compliments which have been ſo long paid to the knowledge and wiſdom of the antient Egyptians have not been ſo well founded as is generally imagined; and I ſhall draw thoſe reaſons from the only two ſources which occur to me to form a ſound judgment on this matter; *viz.* firſt, the monuments which they have left of their taſte and genius; ſecondly, the accounts which other nations have given of them in theſe reſpects.

It would be difficult to form a judgment of their literary merit without a ſpecimen of their performance in that way, and I do not find that antiquity has tranſmitted to us even their pretenſions to excellence in compoſition. I muſt obſerve, that, though Egypt produced the Papyrus, its uſe to letters was a Greek diſcovery. Their Hieroglyphics indeed have been long admired as the repoſitory of wiſdom and knowledge, though there is great reaſon to think that they are the production of an infant ſtate of ſociety, not yet acquainted with alphabetical[m] writing, which the circumſtances peculiar to Egypt, of the drieſt climate and moſt durable materials, have preſerved, while monuments of the ſame early ſtate of knowledge have periſhed in other countries.

Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, ſeem to owe little to Egypt. The temple of Theſeus is at this moment an undoubted proof of the great perfection of Greek arts as early as the battle of Marathon, out of the ſpoils of which that temple was built. In a climate ſo favourable to buildings as that of Egypt, where there are ſtill conſiderable remains to be ſeen of pyramids of ſuch periſhable materials as unburnt bricks, ſome fragments ſurely would have been preſerved to juſtify their pretenſions. But though we are apt to trace every thing back to Egypt, I believe, in thoſe

[l] See Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer.
[m] See Divine Legation of Moſes.

thoſe arts the Greeks are entirely original, and took their ideas from nature alone; and it appears in *Sculpture*, that the Egyptians ſtuck to their own ſtiff dry manner, even after they were acquainted with the perfect models of the Greek artiſts.

Egypt has, no doubt, produced the moſt ſtupendous, but I muſt add, the moſt abſurd, publick works, of any country I have ever ſeen. Pyramids, obeliſks, labyrinths, artificial lakes, *&c.* without art, elegance, or public utility. They were jealous of ſtrangers, yet they left their frontier defenceleſs. They were well ſituated for commerce, yet they neglected a good harbour.

As to the accounts which we receiv: of them from others; if we take them from the Jews, they amount to no more than that they were the moſt civilized, poliſhed, and learned nation they knew. This is highly probable: yet there ſeems good reaſon to think, that Moſes might be learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, without knowing a great deal; eſpecially if we are to judge by the ſpecimens he has given of their abilities, which is more in favour of their ſlight of hand than their ſcience, and makes them look more like jugglers than philoſophers.

When the Greeks firſt applied to the ſtudy of Nature, and travelled to Egypt (ſuppoſed to have been then the ſchool of ſcience) for inſtruction, we might reaſonably expect ſome favourable accounts of them; but, beſides that what we are told of theſe early travellers is obſcure and ſuſpicious, all we can collect from them does not raiſe our ideas of Egyptian knowledge. If Pythagoras ſacrificed a hecatomb upon finding out the 47th propoſition of the firſt book of Euclid, and Thales an ox on having diſcovered how to inſcribe a rectangled triangle in a circle, after they had ſtudied mathematics in Egypt, the parent of geometry, what opinion does it give us of their maſters? The obſcure account we have of their ſcheme of joining the Nile and the Red-ſea, looks as if they did not underſtand how to take a level. Nor does it ſeem unfair to conclude, that this was, like their other great works, more an object of oſtentation than of public utility: for they diſcouraged navigation and commerce, and neglected a fine harbour on their own coaſt. It is true we found their pyramids formed to the four points of the compaſs; but how ſmall a degree of mathematics does that require? and ſurely Thales having ſhewn them how to meaſure the heights of thoſe pyramids by their ſhadow, is a proof of their little progreſs in trigonometry.

But let us proceed to a third period of their hiſtory, from which we might expect to draw ſomething to form a judgment of their arts and ſciences. When the Greeks conquered Phœnicia, Chaldæa, and Egypt, their taſte, and of courſe their curioſity, was at the higheſt. Whatever the accounts which that elegant and learned people give of the ſchool from which they are ſuppoſed to have received the rudiments of all their knowledge, I can find very little ſaid of the learning or arts of Egypt, except what they brought there themſelves. Homer was ſtudied with more critical attention in Egypt than in any other country, but it was by Greeks: nor do we find that Zenodotus or Ariſtarchus, who took ſo much pains in ſettling the true readings of his works, under the Ptolemies, drew any illuſtrations of their author from the productions of the country in which they wrote. Thoſe learned editors had the greateſt library in the world under their care; yet they have told us nothing of the writers of that country in which it was collected, nor do we find they left us any tranſlations into the Greek except that of the Bible.

If our enquiries into this period are unſucceſsful, we cannot expect much after this country became a Roman province. Strabo, who, with good taſte and a ſound judgment, was a traveller of curioſity and a great admirer of antiquity, had a favourable opportunity from his friendſhip with Ælius Gallus, whom he accompanied as far as Syene and the Æthiopian borders, of knowing what could be learned of this country at that time; but his accounts furniſh nothing to induce us to change our ſentiments on this head.

For theſe reaſons I am of opinion, that Egypt, though civilized when Greece was in a ſtate of barbarity, never got beyond mediocrity either in Arts or Phioſophy. Nor is this out of the order of things, if we conſider the different nature of thoſe countries. The ſingular advantage of Egypt, *viz.* a climate which makes very little cloathing neceſſary, and a ſoil which produces all the neceſſaries for food with very little culture, account for its ſoon emerging out of a ſavage ſtate. But theſe circumſtances, to which it owes its antiquity and its population, are not favourable

vourable to genius. Great exertions, either of mind or body, are not to be expected in a country where nature has ſo well provided againſt hunger and cold, and where an invariable ſameneſs of ſoil, and a conſtant ſerenity of ſky, afford nothing to rouze or animate the paſſions. Compare this with the landſkape of Greece, the varieties of her ſoil, and the viciſſitude of her ſeaſons; and we ſhall not think it extraordinary that the arts of life ſhould begin in one of thoſe countries, and be carried to perfection in the other.

Having ſaid thus much of that myſterious learning which the Poet is ſuppoſed to have brought from Egypt, and wrapped up in allegory; let us bring the reader back to his *true character* as a *Painter*, and ſee if we cannot find *marks* of *imitation* even in his *Religion* and *Mythology*. I believe that a comparative view of the divine truths of his Theology and the ingenious fictions of his Mythology, will ſhew, that, as far as he was at liberty, he drew both ſyſtems from an accurate and comprehenſive obſervation of Nature, under the direction of a fine imagination, a juſt conception, and a ſound underſtanding.

As to his *Religion*, it would be idle, indeed unfair, to introduce a few general obſervations which I ſhall offer on this head by common-place exclamations, againſt the groſs extravagances of the heathen creed. For though we muſt acknowledge that the conduct of Homer's gods would even diſgrace humanity; yet, when we conſider the pure and ſublime notions of the Divine Nature which ſo frequently occur in his writings, it is but juſtice to ſuch exalted ſentiments of the Supreme Being, to pronounce them incompatible with the belief of thoſe ridiculous abſurdities which diſtinguiſh the opinions of the multitude from thoſe of the Poet.

He believed the unity, ſupremacy, omnipotence, and omniſcience of the Divine Nature, Creator, and Diſpoſer of all things: his power, wiſdom, juſtice, mercy, and truth, are inculcated in various parts of the Iliad and Odyſſey: a future ſtate, rewards and puniſhments, and moſt of the principles of ſound divinity, are to be found in his writings.

This looks much leſs like the religion of myſtery than of common ſenſe; and thoſe ſublime but evident truths want not the illuſtrations of deep learning. They are obvious to the plain underſtanding of every thinking man, who, looking abroad and conſulting his own breaſt, as Homer did, compares what he ſees with what he feels.

His *Mythology* diſcovers alſo, if I be not miſtaken, ſome original ſtrokes of the *Painter* and of his *Country*. It ſeems to conſtitute a very diſtinguiſhing difference between true and falſe religion; that while the evidence of the firſt is univerſal, of every country, and coextenſive with creation, the origin of the latter may be often traced to the local prejudices of a particular ſoil and climate. Star worſhip was the native idolatry of a ſerene ſky and deſart plains, where the beauties of the heavens are as ſtriking as the reſt of the external face of nature is dreary and lifeleſs. In vain ſhould we look for Naiades, Dryades, Oriades, *&c.* among the divinities of a country, without ſprings, rivers, trees, or mountains, and almoſt without vegetation; thoſe were the natural acquiſitions of ſuperſtition in her more northern progreſs.

What ſhare Homer had in dreſſing up and modeling the fables of the heathen gods, can, at this time, be little more than matter of mere conjecture; it would however be unreaſonable to think that they were of his own creation. I ſhould rather ſuppoſe that the liberties of poetical embelliſhment, which he may have taken with the popular creed of his time, were ſtrongly engraſted upon vulgar traditional ſuperſtitions which had already laid ſtrong hold of the paſſions and prejudices of his countrymen; an advantage which ſo perfect a judge of human nature would be very cautious of forfeiting: for when the religion of poetry and that of the people were the ſame, any attempt of ſudden innovation in the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem would have been a hazardous experiment, which neither a good Citizen nor a good Poet would care to undertake. I ſhall therefore venture to conclude, that the part of the Poet's fiction which diſhonours his Deities with the weakneſs and paſſions of human nature, was founded in popular legends and vulgar opinion, for which every good Poet, from Homer to Shakeſpeare, has thought proper to have great complaiſance. Take from that original genius of our own country the popular belief in his *ghoſts* and *hobgoblins*, his *light fairies* and his *dapper elves*, with other fanciful perſonages of the *Gothic Mythology*; and you ſap the true foundation of ſome of the moſt beautiful fictions that ever Poet's imagination pro-

duced. That Homer carried this too far, and, ſtudying to pleaſe, neglected to inſtruct, may be very true; for however Plato's ſeverity on this head may have been criticiſed, we muſt find it extremely becoming his known zeal for the inſeparable intereſts of religion and virtue, if we conſider that he had weighty reaſons, which do not reach Shakeſpeare's Mythology, to be alarmed at examples of vice and immorality in the very perſons who were at that time the acknowledged objects of public religious worſhip.

Though the *perſons* and perhaps ſome part of the *action* of his fable might have been originally taken from Egypt and the Eaſt, yet we know that his figures, I may ſay portraits, were his own; and the ſcenery of his Mythology is Grecian; and (which ſtrengthens our conjectures with regard to his country) of the various perſpectives into which we may attempt to place this Greek mythological ſcenery, the Ionian point of view will appear predominant.

I fear I may appear prejudiced to my ſubject, if I look for Nature in this imaginary province, and expect a regard for truth even in the Poet's fable; yet I cannot help thinking, that where his perſons are moſt ideal, his ſcene is not leſs real; and that when his ſubject carries him beyond life, and his divine agents, or (in the language of criticiſm) his Machinery is introduced, the action is carried on with greater powers, no doubt, and upon a larger ſcale, but with the ſame attention to a juſt proportion, and generally in the ſame ſubordination to the invariable laws of time and place; a management which, though it cannot entirely command aſſent, ſoftens extravagance, and leads the Reader ſo inſenſibly to fancy reality in fiction, by rendering both conformable to the ſame general rules of poſſibility and conſiſtence, that it is not eaſy to ſay where the Hiſtorian ends, or the Poet begins.

And yet I deſpair of giving ſatisfaction on this head, within the compaſs which I have preſcribed to myſelf: for though the important and *frequent* uſe of the Machinery, in contributing ſo largely to a ſpirited ſucceſſion of intereſting variety, and eſpecially in relieving the eye from too much of the Scamandrian plain, muſt be obvious to every attentive Reader; yet the eaſy tranſition by which this is effected can only be diſcovered by a nicer examination of thoſe claſſical regions which gave birth, or at leaſt gave ſyſtem and maturity, to his fable. If we form to ourſelves a juſt idea of the reſpective ſituation, diſtance, and perſpective, of Olympus, Ida, the Grecian camp, &c. we ſhall find Homer's celeſtial geography (if I may ſo call it) ſo happily connected with his Map of Troy, that the ſcene is ſhifted from one to the other *naturally*, and with a certain mixture of circumſtantial truths, which operates unobſerved, and throws at leaſt an air of poſſibility into the wildeſt excurſions of fancy. I ſhall explain myſelf by example.

Jupiter, ſeated on *Mount Gargara*, the ſummit of Ida, not ſuſpecting that any of the gods would violate the neutrality he had ſo ſtrictly enjoined, turns his eyes from the ſlaughter of the Scamandrian plain to the peaceful ſcenes of Thrace and Myſia: but *Neptune*, anxious for the diſtreſſed Greeks, had placed himſelf on the top of *Samothrace*, which commands a proſpect of Ida, Troy, and the fleet; having thence obſerved Jupiter turn his back upon the ſcene of action, he reſolves to ſeize that opportunity of annoying the Trojans; with this view he goes home to Aegos for his armour, and proceeds thence to the field of battle, putting up his chariot and horſes between Imbros and Tenedos: at the ſame time *Juno*, not leſs intereſted in the Grecian cauſe, diſcovers, from *Olympus*, what is paſſing at the ſhips, and watching the motions of Jupiter and Neptune, ſhe forms her plan accordingly for rendering the operations of the latter effectual, by keeping Jupiter's attention diverted another way; and having with this view procured the ceſtus or girdle of Venus, ſhe proceeds, firſt to Lemnos, to ſolicit the aid of the god of Sleep, and thence to Jupiter on Gargara.

I doubt much whether any Reader has ever ſuſpected that this fanciful piece of machinery is ſo ſtrictly geographical, that we cannot enter into the boldneſs and true ſpirit of the Poet's conceptions upon this occaſion, without a Map; but if he examines it in that light, he will be pleaſed to find that a view of the land and water here deſcribed, under a certain perſpective, clears up the action, and converts what may otherwiſe appear crowded and confuſed, into diſtinct and pleaſing variety. He will then ſee that the mere change of Jupiter's poſition, while it introduces a moſt beautiful contraſt between ſcenes of innocence and tranquillity, and thoſe of devaſtation and

and bloodshed, is essential to the episode of Neptune and Juno. He will attend those divinities, with new pleasure, through every step of their progress; the mighty strides of the first, and the enchanting description of his voyage, long admired as one of the happiest efforts of a truly poetical imagination, will improve upon a survey of the original scenery, when its correspondence with the fable is discovered. Juno's stages are still more distinctly marked: she goes from Olympus by Pieria and Æmathia, to Athos; from Athos, by sea, to Lemnos, where, having engaged the god of Sleep in her interests, she continues her course to Imbros; and from Imbros to Lectum, the most considerable promontory of Ida; here leaving the sea, she proceeds to Gargara, the summit of that mountain.

When I assure the Reader that I have followed every step of those poetical journies, in my eye, from Mount Ida, and other elevated situations on the Æolian and Ionian side of the Ægean sea; but that I could not take in the several parts so as to form one picture out of the whole from any station in European Greece; he will perhaps allow me to suppose the composition to be Asiatic, and that the original idea of Neptune and Juno's journey was most probably conceived in the neighbourhood of Troy.

I must own that in this sort of inquiry we are apt to indulge our fancy; and it is not without some apprehensions of falling into this error, that, by way of farther explanation, I risk the following conjecture. When I was in those classical countries, I could not help tracing one of the most antient pieces of heathen Mythology up to this source, I mean the war of the Titans with the gods; for though the scene of this story lies in old Greece, yet some of its embellishments look very like the production of an Ionian imagination. I have already taken notice of the beauties of a western evening prospect from this coast: when the sun goes down behind the *cloud-capped* mountains of Macedonia and Thessaly, there is a picturesque wildness in the appearance, under certain points of view, which naturally calls to mind the old fable of the rebel giants bidding defiance to Jupiter, and scaling the heavens, as the fanciful suggestion of this rugged perspective; and we find this striking face of nature adapted to so bold a fiction with a fitness and propriety which its extravagance would forbid us to expect; for it was by no means a matter of indifference which mountains were to be employed, or in what order they were to be piled, to effect this daring escalade. If we compare Homer and Virgil's account of this matter with the present state of the country, we shall find a variation in their descriptions, which, while it sufficiently distinguishes the Roman copy from the Greek original, will best explain my meaning.

There was a tradition[n] in Greece, which is still preserved, that Ossa and Olympus were originally different parts of the same mountain, of which the first formed the top, and the latter the base, till they were separated by an earthquake. It is not improbable that their size and shape, as they appear under an eastern point of view, should have given rise to this tradition, and perhaps suggested, to the inventor of the fable, or, if you please, to the Poet who first adapted it to this Grecian scenery, the order of piling them one upon another. But Virgil, who never saw, or never attended to, this prospect has deviated both from Homer and Nature in placing those mountains so as to form an inverted pyramid.

But it must be acknowledged, that Virgil seldom errs by departing from Homer: if his machinery will not bear so scrupulous a review as that of the Greek Poet, it is in general less his fault

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[n] Οσσαν επ' Ουλυμπῳ μεμασαν θεμεν, αυταρ επ' Οσσῃ
Πηλιον εινοσιφυλλον, ιν' ουρανος αμβατος ειη. Od. xi. 314.

"Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
"Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum." Virg. Geor. i. 281.

Homer's Order is "Olympus, Ossa, Pelion;" Virgil's is "Pelion, Ossa, Olympus." See Strabo and Mad. Dacier; the first is obscure, and the latter seems to have mistook his meaning. The Thessalians said, that Neptune made the Valley of Tempe through which the Peneus flows, alluding to this earthquake; and Herodotus approves that opinion; see his Polyhymnia, and the Picture of Neptune in Philostratus, separating those Mountains; see also Strabo, lx. 430, and 531.

fault than his misfortune; nor is the manifeſt inferiority of the Æneid, in this reſpect, to be laid to his charge: a great part of his ſcene of action, though it has ſince acquired no ſmall ſhare of claſſical fame, was not, at that time, ſufficiently conſecrated to the purpoſes of poetry, by the birth, habitation, intrigues, and achievements of gods and heroes; nor is the geographical diſpoſition of Latium ſo favourable to fabulous adventure as that of Greece, where a moſt pleaſing mixture of land and water is wonderfully calculated for a quick ſucceſſion of ſcenery, affording more diſtinct variety than could well be imagined within the ſame compaſs. It was here alone that the dull creed of Egypt could be extended, and modeled into that fanciful ſyſtem of Mythology, which Homer has ſo effectually entailed upon his poetical poſterity, that few of his legitimate ſons have ventured to ſhake off that incumbrance; and perhaps not one who has not failed in the attempt. In accommodating this moſt poetical religion and pictureſque country to the plan of the Iliad and Odyſſey, he had only to chuſe and ſhift the rich materials of this engaging fable and romantic ſcenery, ſuſceptible, under his management, even to a dramatic propriety, of the moſt natural, and yet moſt diverſified combinations and tranſitions that fancy could ſuggeſt; while Virgil, not daring to loſe ſight of his great model, not only brings his gods from Greece, but his ſhepherds from Arcadia, and his ſwans from Cayſter; if Diana dances, it muſt be on the banks of the Eurotas, &c.

That the Roman Poet has many obligations to Homer, is evident to the ſlighteſt peruſal of their different compoſitions; but the difficulties he laboured under, in adapting the beauties of the Iliad and Odyſſey to a later age and different meridian, have not, to my knowledge, been obſerved. When Homer's object was to ſurprize and aſtoniſh his audience, ever conforming himſelf to the known ſtate of the globe in his days, he carried them far weſt of his own country, to the unfrequented coaſt of Italy; but Science, unluckily for both Poets, making her progreſs in the ſame weſtern direction, had, before Virgil's time, diſſipated that darkneſs (ſo favourable to the marvelous,) in which Italy was involved, in the heroic ages: the author of the Æneid found Circe's iſland in his neighbourhood, and the country of the Læſtrigones among the gardens of the Roman nobility: the diſtance of the ſcene, which was ſo convenient to Homer, ceaſed to have its operation with regard to the Roman Poet, whoſe countrymen, however credulous of Eaſtern wonders, had not ſo much faith in romantic ſtories of ſtrange adventures nearer home. I dare ſay the Ithaca of Homer never raiſed a ſmile in his cotemporary audience; though the Romans, to whom this little iſland was a familiar object in their paſſage between Italy and Greece, treat it in a ſtyle of jocularity natural enough from the maſters of the world to ſo diminutive a kingdom.

HOMER'S MANNERS.

OF the ſeveral proofs which might be alledged in favour of Homer's knowledge of different countries, his lively delineations of *national character* muſt have furniſhed the ſtrongeſt and moſt pleaſing, to thoſe who lived near his time; whilſt the original features of this kind remained entire enough to be compared with the deſcriptions he has left of them. But though the *different manners* of Homer's countries may ſtill retain a few faint impreſſions of ſome peculiarities, which are ſo ſtrongly connected with the climate and ſoil, that no ſtate-convulſion has been able wholly to obliterate them; yet thoſe nice diſtinctions are too much worn out, to be traced, at this day, with any tolerable degree of certainty. We muſt therefore content ourſelves with conſidering Homer as the faithful hiſtorian of the manners of his age, and his portraits of national character as the only, and therefore the valuable, copies of originals which no longer exiſt; for they are drawn with too much preciſion, and ſupported throughout with too much conſiſtence, for us to believe that he had acquired his knowledge of mankind at home.

But though few veſtiges are now to be diſcovered of the diſtinguiſhing character of *particular* nations at that time, yet the *general reſemblance* between the antient manners of the Eaſt, and thoſe which prevail, in the ſame part of the world, in our days, is ſo remarkable, that for the credit of Homer, we cannot paſs it over without notice. For perhaps no circumſtance has

has tended ſo much to injure the reputation of that extraordinary genius in the judgment of the preſent age, as his repreſentation of cuſtoms and manners ſo very different from our own. Our elegant neighbours the French ſeem to be moſt offended at certain pictures of primitive ſimplicity, ſo unlike thoſe refined modes of modern life, in which they have taken the lead; and to this we may partly impute the ſevere treatment which the Poet met with in that country, about the end of the laſt and the beginning of this century: yet Homer was not without reſpectable friends and powerful protection upon that occaſion °.

To reconcile ourſelves to uſages and cuſtoms ſo very oppoſite to our own, is a taſk too difficult for the generality of mankind; and therefore Homer's manners muſt ever be liable to exceptions in proportion to their difference from thoſe of his Readers. We may add, that many beautiful alluſions to the times for which he wrote are irretrievably loſt even to the moſt converſant in antiquities. However, as we found the manners of the Iliad ſtill preſerved in ſome parts of the Eaſt, nay retaining, in a remarkable degree, that genuine caſt of natural ſimplicity, which we admire in his works and the ſacred books, it may not be improper to examine how far this reſemblance between ſuch diſtant periods extends.

But firſt let us enquire how it came to paſs, that ſo great an invariability in the modes of life ſhould be peculiar to that part of the world. That ſo many of the cuſtoms of Homer's age, and ſtill more of the antient Jews, ſhould be continued down to the preſent times, in countries which have undergone ſuch a variety of political revolutions, is extraordinary. Preſident Monteſquieu's manner of accounting for this ſingular ſtability of Eaſtern manners is not at all ſatisfactory in my opinion. I ſhall propoſe a conjecture on this head, which occurred in that part of our travels through Arabia where we found this reſemblance moſt ſtriking. But that the Reader may form a better judgement on this matter, it will be neceſſary to lay before him a general view of the interior and uncultivated part of that peninſula, and its inhabitants.

There is perhaps no country in the world leſs capable of variation, either for better or worſe, than the extenſive deſerts of Arabia. The former magnificence of Palmyra, which flouriſhed in ſo remarkable a degree in the midſt of thoſe uncultivated plains, though now deſolate and in ruins, may appear to contradict this opinion; but if we conſider the motives and means which produced a moſt magnificent and opulent city in ſo extraordinary a ſituation it will remove this difficulty. The firſt inhabitants of Tedmor could have no temptation to ſettle there, except the fountain which we have elſewhere deſcribed P. This made it, at all times, the moſt convenient reſting-place between the Euphrates and the cultivated parts of Syria on the ſea coaſt; the poſſeſſion of which effectually commanded the paſſage of the deſert, for neither troops or caravans could proceed without the permiſſion of the Proprietors of this fountain, of which we had ſufficient proof in our journey to this place; for though our camels bore the paſſage of the deſart very well, our horſes and mules were ſo languid and exhauſted by a march of twenty-ſix hours on thoſe ſandy plains in a hot ſun without a drop of water, that I am convinced they could not have gone much farther. Palmyra, thus poſſeſſed, by ſituation alone, of the balance both of power and commerce, between the Eaſtern and Weſtern world, then contending for the empire of the whole, made aſtoniſhing efforts to change the face of that country, the only poſſible way of changing its manners. Water was brought, at incredible labour and expence, from diſtant mountains, to produce that vegetation which Nature had denied; but with ſo little ſucceſs, that even the attempt, great as it was, has but narrowly eſcaped

° The principal managers of this controverſy were Boileau, Madame Dacier, Boivin, &c. on the ſide of Homer, and La Motte, Perrault, Teneſſon, and Fontenelle, &c. who took part againſt him. Without entering into the merits of a diſpute which was carried on with unbecoming acrimony on both ſides, we may venture to ſay, upon the whole, that the Poet was more abuſed and more complimented upon that occaſion than he deſerved; and as his enemies charged him with faults he is not guilty of, ſo his friends diſcovered beauties in him of which he never dreamed. But I muſt obſerve that thoſe who were loudeſt in their abuſe of Homer did not underſtand the language in which he wrote.

P See Ruins of Palmyra.

eſcaped [q] oblivion: ſo that this ſingular ſpot has not only relapſed into its primitive condition and appearance, (the vaſt ruins excepted,) but has recovered its priſtine inhabitants, with their cuſtoms, manners, language, and, what is moſt extraordinary, their traditions. In vain did we attempt to explain to the Arabs any fact recorded on the marbles which we found there; they treated the account of ſome of thoſe buildings, which we read to them from the inſcriptions, with great contempt, as the invidious contrivance of later times to rob Solomon the ſon of David (Solymon Ebn Doud) of the honour of having erected them: in ſhort, Palmyra and Zenobia are names abſolutely unknown, at this day, to the Bedouins of the deſert; where Tedmor and Solomon are the conſtant ſubjects of encomium and admiration.

It ſeems univerſally true with regard to a people, tho' roughly habituated to the ſweets of unbounded liberty, that they are not eaſily tempted to reſign the roving pleaſures of that *unhouſed free condition* for the quiet, eaſe, ſecurity, and even luxuries, of regular Society. This obſervation may be juſtly applied to the true Bedouin. The Hottentot or Cheroquee is not fonder of his native woods, than the wandering Arab is of his ſandy domain. As his wants are few, for he knows only thoſe of nature, ſo his deſires are confined; for he either ſubdues, or affects to diſclaim, thoſe he cannot gratify. Thus *architecture* and *agriculture* are not meerly matters of indifference to him, as things out of his reach; he holds them in contempt, priding himſelf in his poor tent, under the walls of cities; and deſpiſing tillage as a mean occupation, compared with his rambling paſtoral life: this averſion to the Huſbandman is reciprocal, and *a Shepherd has ever been an abomination to an Egyptian*. He reſpects birth and family, about which the Turks are indifferent; is rather more rigid than they are in his expectations of female reſerve, is not addicted to their unnatural paſſion, but agrees with them in the excluſion of women from ſociety. He is temperate, brave, friendly, hoſpitable, true to his engagements, nice in his point of honour, and, in general, ſcrupulouſly obſervant of the duties of his religion: yet his ideas of plunder and rapine are perfectly conformable to thoſe of the heroic and patriarchal times. Thus is his life ſtrangely divided between deeds of cruelty, violence, and injuſtice, on the one hand; and the moſt generous acts of humanity, on the other.

Breeding cattle is his profeſſion; hunting and hawking are his principal amuſements; while robbery and devaſtation are not leſs the objects of his ambition than of his avarice. He lives conſtantly in tents, is much on horſeback, always armed, and generally meditating either enterprize or retreat. To this ſtate of continual action or alarm his circumſtances are peculiarly adapted; for his property, his family, his buſineſs, his pleaſures, and I may add, his laws and his religion (or more properly his courts of juſtice and places of worſhip) are almoſt as moveable as his perſon.

The Arabs boaſt a purer and more unmixed antiquity than any other nation: hiſtory, and the nature of their country, ſeem to concur in the ſupport of this claim.

According to the Moſaic account, Arabia muſt have been among thoſe countries which were firſt peopled; and there is good reaſon to believe, that the inland parts of that peninſula have never been conquered, notwithſtanding the claims of ſo many different nations, who have, all in their turn, reckoned the Arabs among their ſubjects.

As to the preſent pretenſions of the Ottoman Porte to dominion over Arabia, they ſeem to reſt much upon the ſame footing with thoſe of former ages. I never travelled in any part of thoſe deſerts, where it would not have been dangerous to produce my Turkiſh firman or paſſport;

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[q] Had thoſe ruins been ſwallowed up by an earthquake before we ſaw them, or had the materials been applied to other purpoſes, which their diſtance from any town or city has prevented, it would have been a matter of great doubt whether ſuch magnificence had ever exiſted there. Hardouin expreſſes his incredulity on this head in a very laconick manner, without giving any reaſon for it; talking of thoſe who had given ſome account of thoſe remains, he ſays, "quorum tamen nollem fidem præſtare." See his notes on Pliny, lib. v. cap. 25.

port; and where a janiſſary, inſtead of procuring that ſecurity and reſpect which I experienced from his protection in provinces acknowledging obedience to the Grand Signor, would not have expoſed me to abuſe and inſult: the *preſents* (a term of extenſive ſignification in the Eaſt) which are diſtributed annually, by the Baſhaw of Damaſcus, to the ſeveral Arab princes, through whoſe territory he conducts the caravan of pilgrims to Mecca, are, at Conſtantinople, called a free gift, and conſidered as an act of the Sultan's generoſity towards his *indigent ſubjects*; while, on the other hand, the Arab ſhecks deny even a *right* of paſſage through the diſtricts of their command, and exact thoſe ſums as a *tax* due for the permiſſion of going through *their country*. In the frequent bloody conteſts, which the adjuſtment of thoſe fees produce, the Turks complain of *robbery*, and the Arabs of *invaſion*. This is the ſubſtance of all that I could learn on this head by diligent inquiry, not only at *Conſtantinople* and in the *Deſert*, but at *Damaſcus*; at the laſt place I had an opportunity of collecting the moſt authentic information on both ſides of the queſtion.

The Arabs of Paleſtine have the ſame ideas with regard to that country: they conſider it as their hereditary property from the earlieſt times, notwithſtanding many temporary invaſions of their right; and though there is now an Aga at Jeruſalem, acting under the Baſhaw of Damaſcus, and regularly appointed by the Porte, he looks more like a Military Officer levying contributions in an enemy's country, than the Governor of a Province, in acknowledging allegiance to the Sultan: he has no influence, no reſpect paid him, even no ſecurity but in his walls, and in his military force. The pilgrims, who do not purchaſe Arab protection, are frequently plundered within ſight of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the very gates of the capital.

In this ſketch of the interior of Arabia, which has, to the beſt of my obſervation, all the accuracy that ſo general a deſcription will admit, the Reader will perhaps acknowledge with me (as one cauſe which may have contributed towards the *uniformity* and *ſtability* of Oriental manners,) a perpetual and inexhauſtible ſtore of the aboriginal modes and cuſtoms of primeval life, inacceſſible to the varieties and fluctuations, which conqueſt, commerce, arts, or agriculture, introduce in other places; and expanding, or contracting, its circle of influence on the neighbouring countries, according to their vicinity, their intercourſe, and the various revolutions of their reſpective fortunes.

But it is impoſſible to do this ſubject juſtice, without taking likewiſe into conſideration the manners[r] of the ſacred writers, which come ſo much nearer thoſe of Arabia than Homer's, as they lived nearer that country, and as moſt of the ſcenes which they deſcribe lie either in it, or contiguous to it. As to the conformity of ſtyle and ſentiment between thoſe writers and the poet, it is no more than what we are to expect in juſt copies of the ſame original; nor does it ſeem at all neceſſary to account for the agreement from Homer's ſuppoſed knowledge of the Jewiſh learning through the Egyptian prieſts, as ſome ingenious men have too looſely conjectured.

To enter into this compariſon of the *Heroic*, *Patriarchal*, and *Bedouin* manners, with that minuteneſs, to which it may hereafter be extended in the journal of my Eaſtern travels, would exceed the purpoſe of this abſtract: I ſhall at preſent content myſelf with laying before the reader ſome of the moſt ſtriking features in this reſemblance, which I ſhall conſider ſeparately.

I will venture to ſay, that the traveller who has time and opportunities of making obſervations on the *manners* and *cuſtoms* of thoſe countries which I have viſited in the Eaſt will (1) be ſurprized to ſee how far *Diſſimulation* and *Diffidence* are carried there: he will (2) be ſhocked at the ſcene of *cruelty*, *violence*, and *injuſtice*, which muſt neceſſarily fall within his notice, as (3) he

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[r] American manners might alſo have a place here, and furniſh ſtrong teſtimony of the reſemblance of Homer's picture of human nature; but though, in ſome reſpects, ſavage manners have full as much dignity as thoſe of the Heroic or any age (for I will venture to ſay that even the Spartan conſtitution never carried a *ſenſe of honour*, a *contempt of danger*, and a *patience of pain*, further than ſome of the Indian tribes); yet in general their ſtage of civilization is far ſhort of that which the Poet deſcribes.

he will (3) be charmed with the general ſpirit of *hoſpitality* which prevails ſo much more there than in Europe; he will (4) regret the *loſs* of *female ſociety*, and be diſguſted at the *licentious ſtyle of pleaſantry* which takes place of it: when he ſees perſons of the higheſt rank employed in the loweſt domeſtick duties, he will (5) be offended at the *meanneſs* of ſuch occupations: and as to the general turn of *wit* and *humour*, it will (6) appear either *flat* and *inſipid*, or *coarſe* and *indelicate*.

But when he finds ſimilar repreſentations of life in Homer and the Jewiſh writers, he will conclude that they are not the *capricious* ſingularities of a particular age or country, but that they may be traced up to ſome *common cauſes*; perhaps to the nature of *ſoil* and *climate*, and to the ſpirit of that *unequal legiſlation*, to which Oriental timidity has hitherto indolently ſubmitted, not daring to aſſert the natural rights of mankind. Let us now ſee how far the *ſix general claſſes*, into which I have divided the *ſimilarities* of the antient *Greek* and *Jewiſh*, and the preſent *Arabian manners* (merely in conformity to the order in which obſervations of this kind occurred in our travels) are all in ſome degree connected with the ſame imperfect ſtate of ſociety.

I. There is nothing more remarkable in the manners of the Eaſt, eſpecially to an Engliſhman, than the degree of refinement to which profound *Diſſimulation* is carried, particularly among thoſe in power. In the viſits and common intercourſe of the Great, as much attention is paid to the looks as to the words of the company; and the ſpeaker generally weighs what he is to anſwer, by the countenance of the perſon he converſes with, rather than by his own ſentiments or opinion of the queſtion; and accommodates his language much leſs to truth and matter of fact than to the private purpoſes of his hopes or fears. In ſhort, all *confidence* is deſtroyed by the deſpotiſm of the Eaſt; *ſuſpicion* begins with the Prince, and from him a general diffidence ſpreads through every rank and order, ending only in the man who has nothing to fear becauſe he has nothing to loſe. The arts of *diſguiſe* are in thoſe countries the great arts of life, and the character of Ulyſſes would form a perfect model for thoſe who wiſh to make their way in it with ſecurity and reſpect; a Spy, who is privately employed in other countries, is here an avowed officer of ſtate. But then, in proportion to the diffidence in government, private confidence and friendſhip, where it exiſts at all, is carried great lengths; and the Arab hiſtory, which is ſo full of political treachery, abounds alſo in accounts of private friendſhips, which do not fall ſhort of thoſe of Pylades and Oreſtes, Achilles and Patroclus, or Saul and Jonathan.

II. *Cruelty*, *Violence*, and *Injuſtice*, are ſo evidently the reſult of defective government, that it is unneceſſary to look for any other general cauſe of the ſcenes of this ſort, with which Homer abounds, in common with the ancient Jewiſh writers, and agreeable to the preſent manners of thoſe countries; when every man is, in a great meaſure, judge in his own cauſe, vices of this claſs are not only more frequent, but, *in foro conſcientiæ*, leſs criminal than in a civilized ſtate, where the individual transfers his reſentments to the community, and private injury is redreſſed by publick juſtice: where the legiſlature does not engage for our perſonal ſecurity, we have a right to deſtroy thoſe from whom we ſee danger; in ſuch caſes bodily *ſtrength* and *courage* muſt decide moſt conteſts, while, on the other hand, *craft*, *cunning*, and *ſurprize*, are the legitimate weapons of the weak againſt the ſtrong. We accordingly find that both the antient and modern hiſtory of the Eaſt is a continued narrative of bloodſhed and treachery; and in the Heroic times Homicide was ſo common, that we ſee the Poet alluding to a fugitive murderer taking ſhelter under the roof of a ſtranger (to eſcape, not publick juſtice but, the revenge of the relations of the deceaſed) as a familiar occurrence in life. Some of the favourite characters of the Iliad and Odyſſey had fled their country for this crime; and moſt of Homer's Heroes would, in the preſent age, be capitally convicted in any country in Europe on the Poet's evidence.

III. But that *Hoſpitality* ſhould be derived, in any degree, from the ſame ſource, may ſeem a paradox to thoſe who have not obſerved, that this virtue prevails in moſt countries, and in the different provinces of each country, very much in proportion to the *idleneſs*, *poverty*, and *inſecurity*, which attend a defective police. As *diſſimulation* may be properly called an *Oriental*

tal Vice, ſo *Hoſpitality* will retain the name of an *Oriental virtue*; and both will prevail in the Eaſt as long as Deſpotiſm continues to be the mode of government in that part of the globe. It is ſome conſolation, in ſo wretched a ſtate of ſociety, that what is ſo well adapted to ſooth the ſeverity of unfeeling power ſhould be moſt cultivated where it is moſt wanted. In Arabia, the *rights of hoſpitality* (ſo properly called the point of honour of the Eaſt) ſeem to be the happy ſubſtitute of *poſitive law*; which, in ſome degree, alleviate the *vices* of the ſoil, and connects, in a voluntary intercourſe of kind offices, thoſe vagabond tribes, who laugh at the laws of nations, deny the perfect rights of mankind, and ſet the civil magiſtrate at defiance: Strong inſtance of the powers of that generous principle in the ſocial conſtitution of human nature, which ſeems to be predominant even in her moſt untoward and ungovernable moods, when the voice of ſympathy prevails, though the mandates of legiſlation are deſpiſed!

IV. We muſt acknowledge that this moſt pleaſing feature, in a portrait of *Heroic*, *Patriarchal*, and *Modern Oriental* life, is ſadly contraſted by a gloomy part of the picture, which produces the moſt ſtriking difference between our manners and theirs; I mean, that *unnatural ſeparation of the ſexes*, which precludes the female half from that ſhare in the duties and amuſements of life, which the common intereſts of ſociety ſeem to demand [s].

The ſad effects of this tyrannical proſcription of the moſt amiable part of the creation (the true and univerſal characteriſtic of ſavage life) are only known to thoſe who experience the happineſs of a more liberal diſtribution of the buſineſs and pleaſures of the male and female province, which not only ſooths the cares, and enlivens the joys of the retired, domeſtic ſcene, but, in the more active and enlarged ſphere of ambition and enterprize, ſoftens ferocity, while it animates indifference, and rouzes into action the nobleſt powers of the human mind. What a blank muſt we then find in the manners of that country, where one ſex is debaſed by a moſt humiliating ſervitude and baniſhment, which deprives the other of the moſt powerful motives to great and generous undertakings! Yet ſuch was the *Heroic* and *Patriarchal* ſtate of ſociety; and ſuch it is, *at this day*, in the Eaſt; with a difference, however, that is in much in favour of Homer's manners: for though the female ſubordination is ſtrongly marked in the Iliad and Odyſſey, yet women ſeem to make more a part of ſociety than among the antient Jews, and certainly much more than the preſent Oriental reſtrictions on this head permit.

As the influence of a cuſtom ſo fatal to public and private happineſs muſt have extended, in ſome degree, to the whole ſyſtem of Heroic manners; it is impoſſible to do juſtice to the original productions of genius in that age, without making allowance for its effects in a true picture of life. Is it not very remarkable, that Homer, ſo great a maſter of the *tender* and *pathetic*, who has exhibited Human Nature in almoſt every ſhape, and under every view, has not given a ſingle inſtance of the powers and effects of *love*, diſtinct from ſenſual enjoyment, in the Iliad [t]? though the occaſion

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[s] It is true, we find Arete among the men; and Helen ſcarce makes her appearance in other company, either in the Iliad or Odyſſey: but if we meet with no other inſtances of this kind in Homer, we ſhould obſerve, that the firſt is an old woman, and queen of a moſt debauched, voluptuous people; as the laſt can ſcarce be quoted as a proper example, when the propriety of female conduct is in queſtion. However, the female reſerve was not ſo great in Homer's time as it was afterwards in Greece; and when Euripides carries it ſo far in his Iphigenia, he had his own manners more in view than thoſe of the Heroic age. There is, indeed, one very ſingular and unaccountable inſtance of female indecency in Homer, I mean, that of the young women, though baniſhed from the company of men on other occaſions, yet conſtantly employed in waſhing them in the bath.

[t] Mr. Pope has obſerved, "That pity and the ſofter paſſions are not of the *nature* of the Iliad;" he might have ſaid, that they are not of the *character* of Homer's manners; yet, when they are introduced amidſt the terrors of death and ſlaughter, the contraſt is irreſiſtible: and a tender ſcene in the Iliad, like a cultivated ſpot in the Alps, derives new beauties from the horrors which ſurround it. Indeed had he left us but one ſpecimen of this kind, the interview of Hector and Andromache, in the ſixth book, it is ſufficient to ſhew his entire command over our ſofteſt feelings. Should I preſume to ſee a fault in this admired picture, it is one that falls, not upon the Poet, but his manners;

occaſion of the war, which is the ſubject of that poem, might ſo naturally introduce ſomething of this kind: nor can I allow the ſtory of Ulyſſes and Calypſo, in the Odyſſey, to come up to our ideas of that paſſion, any more than that of Jupiter and Juno, Mars and Venus, and ſome other *love-ſcenes* of primitive manners. Virgil's age happily ſupplied him with thoſe pictures, to which Homer was a ſtranger; and he availed himſelf moſt ſucceſsfully of this opening; for, taking the mere outline of his ſtory from the Greek Poet, he has left us a maſter-piece in that kind, as much above the original, for elegant expreſſion of all the varieties of that paſſion, as Dido is ſuperior to Calypſo in tenderneſs and delicacy of ſentiment:

Let us not account for this by ſuppoſing, with ſome of his beſt commentators, that he conſidered the paſſion of love as a weakneſs unworthy of a Hero; Homer reſpected nature too much, to deſpiſe or ſuppreſs any of her genuine feelings. But, in ſhort, this paſſion, according to our ideas of it, was unknown to the manners of that age. Not only the male characters, particularly that of the Hero of the Iliad, retain the harſhneſs and ferocity of this defect; but the female ſphere of action, which is now properly extended, was then confined to the uniformity of ſervile domeſtic duties: the *Prude* and *Coquet*, with all the intermediate *ſhades of female character*, are as much beyond Homer's knowledge of life, as his employing royal beauty in the meaneſt offices of domeſtic drudgery falls ſhort of the refined attentions of modern gallantry.

Without purſuing this thought to the remote conſequences to which it may lead a more curious enquirer, I ſhall only attempt to deduce from it an apology, or rather an account of ſome coarſe pictures, which are but too often and too faithfully copied from the manners now under our conſideration.

When ideas of *love* extended little further than animal enjoyment, the Poet, who engaged in this ſubject, was confined to mere licentious deſcriptions of female beauty, or to ſuch repreſentations of its effects as modern delicacy will not ſuffer.

As the ſubject, ſo of courſe the language, of this paſſion, was barren and contracted; the ſimplicity of thoſe times had not yet wandered into circumlocution, the whole vocabulary of love conſiſting of one term; and, in proportion to the rigour and ſeverity of the female proſcription, the expreſſion was careleſs and indelicate.

But the footing upon which a more rational intercourſe of the ſexes is now conducted, gives a new turn to ſociety, and has a great ſhare in producing the *varieties* of modern character; for a certain proportion of voluntary attention in one ſex, and of unpreſcribed reſerve in the other, equally unknown to Homer and the Eaſt, not only regulate, in a great meaſure the ſtyle and tone of what is ſo variouſly called good-breeding in private life, but materially influence publick virtues and the happineſs of a people. Hence ariſes a new ſet of words, as well as ideas; the *coarſe*, the *delicate*, the *decent*, the *obſcene*, the *forward*, the *reſerved*, are relative terms, not only varying as to their former and preſent ſignification, but bearing different meanings now in different parts of Europe, as the male and female intercourſe is more or leſs promiſcuous and familiar.

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ners; and may help to explain my ideas on this matter. Andromache having raiſed our pity and compaſſion to the utmoſt ſtretch that tragedy can carry thoſe paſſions; Hector anſwers,

Η και εμοι ταδε παντα μελει, γυναι.

and concludes,

Αλλ' εις οικον ιουσα, &c.

His meaning here was to divert Andromache's attention to other objects, and the expreſſion was meant to convey the utmoſt tenderneſs; but has it that effect upon us? is not the Engliſh Reader offended at a certain indelicacy in thoſe words which Homer puts in the mouth of an affectionate huſband to his wife, and, in another place, of a moſt dutiful ſon to his mother? See Odyſſ. φ. 350. Indeed the whole behaviour of Telemachus to Penelope, however reſpectful, puts us in mind of the Athenian law, which conſtituted the ſon, when he was of age, the κυριος, or guardian, of his mother.

While I ſhould be ſorry, by thoſe obſervations, to reconcile any reader to certain indecent pictures of the Iliad and Odyſſey, much leſs to others of the Jewiſh writers, in the ſame groſs manner, but of a much coarſer expreſſion; yet I could wiſh to diſtinguiſh them from ſome infamous productions of later dates, and more poliſhed countries, for which there is no apology, by throwing the blame, where it chiefly lies, upon the manners of the times, rather than on the painter. It would be great injuſtice to Homer, not to pay him the compliment which thoſe conſiderations ſuggeſt: I will venture to ſay, that, upon an impartial view of this part of his character, he will appear to excel his own ſtate of ſociety, in point of *decency* and *delicacy*, as much as he has ſurpaſſed more poliſhed ages in point of *genius*.

V. In an age when *rank* and *condition* are multiplied and ſubdivided with ſo much nice and punctilious preciſion, it is difficult to reconcile ourſelves to the *ſimplicity of one uniform ſet of manners*, where the great diſtinction is that of lord and ſlave, maſter and ſervant: nor can we bear to ſee thoſe who preſide in public council, and lead an army to the field, employed in tending their flocks, and dreſſing their dinners.

In ſhort, it is impoſſible to be ſo much intereſted in the juſteſt repreſentations of nature we never ſaw, as in thoſe which come home to our own experience of life: I cannot help, therefore, obſerving, that the *Paſtoral Poetry* of an age or country, where *paſtoral manners* do not prevail, however *natural* in *ſcenery*, muſt be *artificial* as to *characters*; and that the only original pictures of this kind are to be found in the ſtate of ſociety now under conſideration. I beg leave to extend this obſervation a little, which, by bringing us back to the origin of Paſtoral Poetry, may perhaps let us into the nature of a ſpecies of compoſition ſo little underſtood, that criticiſm has not yet been able to eſtabliſh its real character, or to fix any ſtandard or criterion to direct our judgment in this reſpect.

When the cares as well as the pleaſures of the country were compatible with the higheſt rank, and the Prince and Peaſant were literally united in the ſame perſon; elevation of ſentiment and expreſſion belonged to the Royal Shepherd, and were found in rural life. Hence it is that the Jewiſh Paſtoral, though obſcure, and defective in the art of compoſition, affords the boldeſt flights of genius of this kind; and that Homer ſtands next in rank for original Paſtoral beauties, with leſs ſublimity of ſentiment, it is true, and leſs energy of expreſſion, but more pictureſque in his ſcenery, and more chaſte in his manners; advantages over the Jewiſh Poets, which he derived from a finer country, and a leſs rude period of ſociety. The modern Arab, in whom I have ſeen the characters of *Prince*, *Shepherd*, and *Poet* united, retains, in his compoſitions of this kind, the wildneſs, irregularity, and indelicacy, of his forefathers, with a conſiderable ſhare of the ſame original glowing imagination, which we could diſcover, even in their extempore productions, and under the diſadvantage of crude and haſty tranſlation.

But when Theocritus, and his imitator, Virgil, wrote in a refined age, and for poliſhed courts, the Prince and Shepherd were ſo totally ſeparated, that they formed the oppoſite extremes of ſociety; their paſtoral *dramatis perſonæ* were, of courſe, taken from the *loweſt* condition in life, to deliver the ſentiments and feelings of the *higheſt*; an inconſiſtence which the acknowledged beauties of the Greek and Roman Poet cannot make us overlook; yet, in attempting to avoid this abſurdity, they generally fall into a worſe fault; for it muſt be allowed, that their characters pleaſe *leaſt* when they are *moſt* paſtoral. As to later productions of this kind, being confined to no ſtandard in nature, they fluctuate between thoſe extremes, according to the fancy of the Poet, the degree of his veneration for the great models of antiquity, or of his prejudices in favour of the manners of his own country. The conſequence of this is, that either the language and ſentiment are lowered to the condition of the ſpeaker, and become mean and diſguſting; or they are borrowed from a higher ſphere in life, and offend one of the moſt eſtabliſhed rules in Poetics.

VI. We now come to the ſixth and laſt object of our compariſon. There is perhaps no diſplay of the human faculties, with regard to which the taſte of different ages and countries coincide ſo little, as productions of *wit* and *humour*, whoſe genuine ſpirit is ſo *ſubtile* and *volatile* in its nature, that it *evaporates* upon the leaſt change in the circumſtances which produced it, leaving nothing behind but the inſipid *dregs* of low *buffoonry*.

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If ſuch has been the tranſitory fate of *Greek and Roman wit* of the *beſt* times, we can have little expectations from thoſe *rude* productions which are the objects of our *preſent* compariſon. But as the reſemblance of manners, now under conſideration, extends to certain Comic ſimilarities which ſeem to point towards the ſame *deſpotic* origin whence we have attempted to deduce the moſt ſtriking features in oriental life; a further enquiry into this matter (including what has been ſaid on that groſs and abandoned humour which prevails in a defective ſtate of female ſociety) might furniſh ſome hints towards the *true hiſtory* and *real character* of *Ridicule*.

At this time we ſhall only obſerve, that *imperfect ſociety* neither affords the *matter* or *manner* neceſſary to a fair experiment of talents of this kind.

The uniform *ſameneſs* of primitive life is incapable of the *firſt*; for, while it gives an air of gravity and dignity to manners, it cramps the Comic Genius, which can only ripen and flouriſh amidſt *Variety of Character*. The attentions of rude ſociety are barely ſufficient for the neceſſaries of life; thoſe of a more advanced period are taken up with its ſuperfluities: then it is that falſe appetites and imaginary wants are created, unknown to Nature, to Homer, and the Bedouin; Arts, Trades, Profeſſions, multiply; new Diſtinctions, Ranks, and Conditions, are produced; and, in ſhort, the various Vices, Follies, and Affectations, of a Wealthy, Commercial, Free People, open an ample field of pleaſantry to a Swift, an Addiſon, or a Hogarth. If we have excelled other countries in this walk of humour, it may be aſcribed to our rich diverſity of original character, *open* to every artiſt, under a few ſalutary reſtrictions, which will I hope long preſerve the *juſt balance*, both of our *wit* and our *civil conſtitution*, between the *licentious* and *enervated extremes*.

As the *matter* of primitive wit is circumſcribed by this *barrenneſs* of ſubject, ſo its *manner* is checked by the *danger* of offending. Thus the firſt ſallies of this kind are either controlled by *timidity*, or diſgraced by *roughneſs*, which is ſo cloſely connected with actual violence, that they are often exerciſed together, and called in aid of one another. Hence that illiberal mockery of perſonal deformity, that ungenerous ſneer at poverty, and, above all, that cruel, unmanly irony, and inſolent triumph of the conqueror over the vanquiſhed; which form ſo many diſguſting pictures in *Homer*, in the *Jewiſh* writers, and in the preſent manners of the *Eaſt*, and all barbarous countries, as well as among the vulgar of the moſt civilized, with whom the tranſition from raillery to blows is ſo natural, that the latter ſeems only a bolder and coarſer expreſſion of the firſt.

So cloſe and ſo early an alliance between *Wit* and *Violence* is, I muſt own, very little to the credit of the *former*: I fear it is but a bad apology for *her* to ſay, that *ſhe* commenced acquaintance with that rough companion when *ſhe* was very young. But we muſt not, from partial obſervations, upon a ſubject requiring a more enlarged conſideration, draw general concluſions, unfavourable to Homer and ourſelves; for there are ſome ſtrokes of humour [u] in the Poet, that it will be difficult to reſolve into that *tyrannical* principle, in which, I muſt confeſs, the *brutal raillery* of the Iliad and Odyſſey is too much founded.

As there is no part of this Eſſay to which the obſervations that occurred to me in my Eaſtern travels, particularly in Palæſtine, Egypt, and above all, the interior of Arabia, contribute ſo largely as to this article of *Homer's Manners*; ſo there is none which has coſt me ſo much pains in ſelecting and arranaging, out of copious materials, what might be proper for this contracted Specimen, which, after all, is imperfect in its preſent ſtate. I ſhall be diſappointed if ſome of the Poet's abler admirers, taking up his defence on this ground, do not anticipate part of what I have further to ſay on this ſubject, when I ſhall attempt to try the truth and conſiſtence of the leading characters of the Iliad and Odyſſey, by that true teſt, *viz.* the *manners of the Heroic*

[u] Of this ſort is the comick ſtory which the diſguiſed Ulyſſes tells Eumæus, in the 14th book, of his having forgot his cloak, when he was on an advanced poſt before Troy, in a cold night; and of the arch trick played upon one of the party, who was ſent on a fool's errand upon that occaſion.

Heroic Age; to the reader who judges of them by the preſent times, the courage of Achilles muſt appear *brutal ferocity*, and the *wiſdom* of Ulyſſes *low cunning*.

However, before I conclude, I will venture to make an obſervation which does no more than juſtice to *Homer's original genius*, *viz.* that, from the greateſt *uniformity of ſimple manners* that ever fell to the ſhare of any Poet, he drew the greateſt *variety of diſtinct character* that has been ever produced by one hand.

HOMER AN HISTORIAN.

FROM what has been already ſaid, Homer muſt ſtand unrivalled, as the Father of Hiſtory: to him we owe the earlieſt account of *Arts*, *Science*, *Manners*, and *Government*; and without him, no juſt ideas can be formed of the true ſtate and real *character of primitive ſociety*. This is not only the moſt intereſting of all hiſtorical information, but it is tranſmitted to us upon the moſt inconteſtable authority; for he who has eſtabliſhed the name of *Poet* in his own age, by juſt pictures of life, becomes the *Hiſtorian* of poſterity, upon the moſt reſpectable pretenſions to veracity.

But ſome of the moſt diſcerning judges of antiquity did not confine him to thoſe limits; they prefer his authority, even in matters of fact, to that of profeſſed writers of hiſtory. The Original character of his compoſition is favourable to this opinion; and ſo natural and plauſible a correſpondence between the ſcene and the action of the Iliad would induce us to think, that he took the firſt from *ocular* examination, and the laſt from the prevailing *traditions* of the times. His living in the neighbourhood of Troy ſtrengthens this conjecture; it gave him an opportunity, not only of being thoroughly acquainted with that ſpot, but of collecting circumſtantial accounts of the moſt renowned atchievements of the war, perhaps from the children of thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of the ſiege, and had ſignalized themſelves upon the Scamandrian plain.

Though our object is to eſtabliſh the credit due to Homer, as an *Hiſtorian*, chiefly upon the *conſiſtence* of his facts, and his general character of *truth*, yet we may appeal to other authority for this opinion. The moſt ſatisfactory information of the *early* ſtate of Greece, with regard to its *Policy*, *Laws*, *Manners*, *Navigation* and *Strength*, is that conciſe but ſenſible account which Thucydides prefixes to his hiſtory of the Peloponneſian War; and that Writer, though a declared enemy to poetical hiſtory, forms his opinion of the ancient ſtate of his country from Homer.

That the Ancients differed conſiderably as to the circumſtances of the Trojan War, is certain; and that ſome variations, even in the accounts of thoſe who were actors in that ſcene, left the Poet at liberty to chuſe, or reject, as it beſt ſuited his purpoſe, is probable. Succeeding Poets would take the ſame liberty; and indeed the Tragedians, moſt of whoſe ſubjects are taken from the Trojan ſtory, have departed from Homer in ſeveral inſtances. Euripides choſe a ſubject for one of his plays, which ſuppoſes that Helen never was at Troy; and though he was ſo fond of that plot as to repeat it, for his Helen and his Iphigenia in Aulis differ very little in this reſpect, yet we cannot ſuppoſe that he would have deſerted Homer without any authority. The account which Herodotus had of Helen and Menelaus from the Egyptian Prieſts, was ſufficient ground for him to go upon; and ſhews the different ideas which were adopted ſo early with regard to the Trojan war: yet, when this matter comes to be fairly ſtated between the Poet and the Hiſtorian, I think it will be decided in favour of the firſt; not that I would encourage that diffidence in Herodotus, which I think has been carried too far. Were I to give the opinion I have formed of him, in conſequence of having followed him through moſt of the countries which he viſited and deſcribed, I would ſay, that he is a Writer of *veracity* in his accounts of what he *ſaw*, but of great *credulity* in his relations of what he *heard*.

But there are ſtill other cauſes which have contributed to perplex Homer's hiſtory: As the firſt Poets took libeities with regard to the Trojan war, ſo other Artiſts adopted variations which have contributed to puzzle this ſtory. Polygnotus, whoſe pictures were ſtill admired in the time

time of Pauſanias, who was acquainted with the Poets, and who took his ſubjects from the Trojan War, did not always follow Homer; and in ſome of the ancient pieces of ſculpture ſtill preſerved, the Poet's ideas are not ſcrupulouſly obſerved. As to the Poetry, Painting, and Sculpture of the Romans, I cannot think they are ſufficient authority for Trojan ſubjects. There is no reaſon to believe that Virgil had ever been at Troy; and though he is ſo great an admirer and ſo conſtant an imitator of Homer's poetical beauties, it does not appear that he paid much attention to that accuracy which is the ſubject of our preſent enquiry; nor does he ſeem to have conſidered Homer in the light of a Geographer or Hiſtorian. Tryphiodorus, Colluthus, &c. are of ſtill leſs weight; and when we meet with facts related by them, and not mentioned by Homer, they deſerve attention only ſo far as thoſe Writers might have ſeen ancient authors which are loſt to us: nor are Dares Phrygius, or Dictys-Cretenſis worth conſideration in any other light, than as forgeries of an age, when they might have had an opportunity of collecting ſome minute circumſtances, which they introduce, from ancient authors now loſt. The Romans took great liberties with the Greek Mythology, and the Heroic Hiſtory. This is remarkable in Ovid, who liked thoſe ſubjects, and has wrought them up into a ſyſtem, which, from it's connection, and the fanciful additions which he has made, is conſidered as the moſt compleat, and, being firſt put into our hands, is that which we are moſt acquainted with; for the general cuſtom of learning Latin before Greek forms our ideas more upon the Roman Mythology. Was Homer the firſt Poet we read in a dead language, it would be eaſier to ſeparate his Mythology from the fable of later times. Since the religion of Greece and Rome have been conſidered ſpeculatively by ingenious Writers among the Moderns, who look for deep meaning in every thing that the Ancients have left us, they have generally adopted what beſt ſuited the purpoſe of their ſyſtem, according to the more or leſs favourable ideas they had formed of the wiſdom of antiquity. It is curious to obſerve what notions were propagated on this head upon the revival of letters, when a tincture of ancient fable and heroic hiſtory was received from Italian and French tranſlation. We find in Shakeſpeare, who drew from thoſe ſources, a confuſed idea of the Trojan times, collected from various quarters, and a mixture of Heroic and Gothic Mythology, made up of the traditions of different authorities and different ages.

Such are the adulterations which both Homer's Fable and Hiſtory have undergone. It is difficult to relieve him from the load of contradictions with which his ſucceſſors have embarraſſed this matter; but we may ſeparate his own *conſiſtent* ſtory, and, in matters of this obſcurity, call that the moſt *authentic*.

What I have collected with this view, from the Iliad and Odyſſey, may be ranged under a chronological order, conſiſting of *three periods*.

The *firſt*, anterior to the departure of the Greeks from Aulis, will draw the line between Homer's Mythology and Hiſtory; will take in the traditions of that gigantic race which ended in Eurymedon; the accounts of the Centaurs and Lapithæ, of Ixion and Perithous, of Bellerophon, Perſeus, Theſeus, and Hercules; an account of the Calydonian Boar, the Theban Wars, and the cauſes and preparations for the Siege of Troy.

The *ſecond* period commences with the ſailing of the Greeks for Troy; relates the operations of almoſt ten years ſiege, or rather blockade of that city, including the principal action of the Iliad, and ending with the demolition of the town.

The *third* period begins with that ſpecimen of the whole which I have already given, page xv. It contains the diſperſions, various misfortunes, and different eſtabliſhments of the Greeks, Trojans, and Auxiliaries, and brings us down to Homer's Hiſtory of his own Times. It may throw light on the Æolick, Ionick, and other migrations, and afford ſome conjectures with regard to the origin of Greek Arts, Manners, and Language.

As the principal action of the Iliad takes in no part of the *firſt* period, and very little of the *ſecond*; and as that of the Odyſſey employs a ſtill leſs portion of the *third*; the Poet has interſperſed the ſeveral facts, which are prior or poſterior to the duration of either poem, which he marks with the greateſt preciſion, and yet ſo happily as to produce variety, without injury to that chronological order of which I find them ſuſceptible, when collected and arranged, ſo far as I have hitherto made the experiment. To avoid anachroniſm, it was neceſſary that the later events of the *laſt* period ſhould

ſhould be predicted: among thoſe we find the Deſtruction of Mycenæ, the Demolition of the Greek fortifications, the Succeſſion of Æneas and his family to the kingdom of Troy, &c. As this laſt event has been ſtrongly controverted by ſucceeding writers, it may be neceſſary to do the Poet juſtice in a point which affects him as much in his *Hiſtorical* capacity, as thoſe miſtakes, with regard to the coaſt of Egypt, and the ſituation of Pharos, (which we have attempted to ſet right,) injured him in his *Geographical* character. We ſhall, at preſent, confine our further conſideration of Homer, as an *Hiſtorian*, to his juſtification in this particular.

It may appear ſtrange, at this time, to diſpute the voyage of Æneas to Italy; a fact upon which the origin of the Roman empire is ſo generally founded, which Livy takes for granted, which Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus pretends to have ſo fully proved, and which has gained ſuch univerſal credit for ſo many ages. As an enemy to paradox and ſingularity, I might defend myſelf from the imputation of either, by a pretty long liſt of diſſenting voices from thoſe authorities in which our veneration for Roman antiquity has ſo implicitly acquieſced: but if a confutation of that fact can be ſupported by reaſon and common ſenſe, it will not want the parade of much learned quotation.

I ſhall ſtate the nature of the evidence on both ſides of this queſtion as ſuccinctly as I can, taking into conſideration the arguments both for and againſt Homer's teſtimony; and I ſhall conclude with ſome obſervations upon Virgil's conduct, under the difficulties which embarraſſed the hiſtorical credit of his ſubject

But in order to form a tolerable idea either of the Hiſtory or Geography of Troy, it is neceſſary to correct a miſtake, which has long contributed to the miſrepreſentation of both, by confounding the Phrygians with the Trojans. We found antient geography no where more perplexed than in our travels through Phrygia: this intricacy riſes chiefly from a very early inattention to the different extent of that country at different times, ſo that its doubtful limits became proverbial. It may be difficult to remove the impreſſions we receive on this head from ancient authors, particularly from one ſo familiar to us, ſo much, and ſo juſtly, admired, and ſo thoroughly acquainted with Homer, as Virgil, who not only repreſents the Trojans and Phrygians as the ſame people, but confounds the ancient and modern character of the latter; how improperly, the Reader will judge from the following obſervations, by which I hope to aſcertain Homer's ſenſe of this matter.

1. When Helen, upbraiding Venus as the cauſe of her misfortunes, aſks the Goddeſs what other favourite ſhe has to indulge at her expence, and if ſhe means to lead her further to ſome city of Phrygia or Mæonia, ſhe of courſe diſtinguiſhes thoſe countries from the Troade. 2. When Hector complains that the wealth of Troy is carried to Phrygia and Mæonia, it implies the ſame diſtinction. 3. In a deſcription of the extent and boundaries of Priam's country, it is expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from Phrygia. 4. The Phrygians are numbered among the Trojan auxiliaries in the catalogue; and are deſcribed as living at a diſtance. 5. Priam mentions his having formerly viſited their country. 6, and laſtly, The plot of the ſtory of Venus and Anchiſes, in the Hymn to Venus, (which both Lucretius and Virgil ſeem to have admired), turns chiefly upon this difference of the two countries: the ſcene is on mount Ida; the Goddeſs is repreſented as perſonating a Phrygian girl, and paſſes with Anchiſes for the daughter of Atreus, king of that country; ſhe invents a ſtory of the manner of her coming from Phrygia to Troy, and deſcribes the variety of country ſhe paſſed over in her way; but that her language may not betray her, (which, according to her aſſumed character, ſhould be Phrygian,) ſhe acquaints him that ſhe was brought up by a Trojan nurſe, who taught her the language of Troy, which was as familiar to her as that of her own country.

From the paſſages to which I have referred, I think we may conclude, that, at the time of the Trojan war, Phrygia and Troy were diſtinct countries, governed by princes independent of each other, and uſing different languages. How ſoon and by what means the diſtinction was loſt, is not certain; probably ſoon after the Trojan war, at leaſt before the time of the Tragick Writers, who frequently confound thoſe names. There is a wretched piece of wit of Mneſilochus preſerved, which plays upon the *ſynonymous* term of Phrygian and Trojan [w].

Here

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[w] It was ſuppoſed that Euripides was obliged to Socrates for ſome hints in writing his tragedies. When his TROES appeared, Mneſilochus, in one of his comic pieces, obſerved that, if there was *fire* in that play, Socrates ſupplied the *fewel*; but for the ſake of playing on the words, he uſes Φρυγες for Τρωες, thus:

ΦΡΥΓες εςι καινον δραμα τȣτ' Ευριπιδȣ,
Ω και Σωκρατης τα ΦΡΥΓανα ὑποτισθησι.

Here I ſhould obſerve, that the proofs which eſtabliſh this diſtinction deprive me of one of the moſt favourite arguments of a very powerful advocate for Homer's account of Æneas. Bochart having, with much learned pains, demonſtrated a total want of affinity between the Roman and Phrygian language, concludes that it is incredible one of thoſe nations ſhould be deſcended from the other; becauſe, ſays he, there never was an inſtance of a colony that did not retain, if not the whole, at leaſt ſome traces of the language of the mother country.

This remark is certainly juſt; but how little applicable to the preſent caſe, is unneceſſary to obſerve, if the paſſages I have produced from Homer have convinced the Reader, that Æneas was not a Phrygian. The argument which he draws from that well-eſtabliſhed fact, viz. That the favourite Gods of Troy were not worſhiped at Rome, is more to the purpoſe, and, I think, unanſwerable.

That Æneas and his deſcendents reigned over the Trojans, after the Greeks had deſtroyed the capital of their country, is a fact for which we have Homer's authority; the manner in which this is expreſſed in the Iliad furniſhes us with a proof that the Poet was at leaſt three generations after the ſiege of Troy, and that, if he did not live to ſee the great-grandchildren of Æneas, he muſt have been after them. This is a circumſtance of ſuch perfect indifference either to the general plan, or any particular embelliſhment, of his poem, that he had not the leaſt temptation to depart from the common received opinion on this head; beſides, to deceive, in ſuch a caſe, would have been as difficult as it was uſeleſs; for when Homer produced the Iliad, this event was neither a matter of antiquity or obſcurity, but notorious, either as true or falſe, to his cotemporaries; as therefore he lived in the neighbourhood of Troy, and addreſſed himſelf to the moſt competent judges of this matter of fact, we cannot ſuppoſe that he would ſo wantonly proſtitute his veracity, as to expoſe unmeaning falſhood to the obvious conviction of every Reader, of his own Age and Country.

On the other hand, the higheſt ſource, to which we can trace any contradiction of this fact, falls many ages ſhort of Homer: nor can we find that it was called in queſtion, till the Romans thought fit to derive their origin from Troy; a matter in which we know the vanity of that nation was much concerned; and yet the ſupport of it reſts entirely on Roman authority, without any other teſtimony: an authority which is not only to be ſuſpected becauſe it has an intereſt in the fact it would ſupport, but which, laying aſide that conſideration, amounts to no degree of evidence; for the People who deduce a remote origin, upon the authority of their *own* annals *alone*, are entitled to no more credit than the perſon who ſhould pretend to give an account of his birth, and a journal of the firſt month of his infancy, *merely* from his *own* recollection of what paſſed when he was in the nurſe's arms.

But however freely we may treat this imaginary voyage now; to have expreſſed doubts upon ſo tender a point, at Rome, in the reign of Auguſtus, would have been thought little ſhort of both *hereſy* and *faction*. This conſideration ſufficiently juſtifies the Poet's choice of a ſubject, could we ſeriouſly think it wanted juſtification; but the more we enter into the ſtate of things when he wrote, the poſture of the Roman affairs, the reigning opinions and prejudices, civil and religious, both of the Prince and People, and the preciſe relation in which the Poet ſtood, as well with regard to the whole, as to ſome individuals, at that conjuncture, the more we ſhall think him peculiarly happy in that choice; and indeed, to thoſe who do not enter into thoſe particulars, many of the beauties of the Æneid are loſt.

And here allow me to obſerve, that it is well worth the attention of thoſe who would enter into a fair comparative view of the characters of the Greek and Roman Poets, to conſider the different lights in which they ſtand in this reſpect; the latter is admirable for pertinent and elegant alluſion to his own times, always introduced with ſtrict propriety, and conducted with great judgment: whatever Homer might have had of this ſort, for readers of that age, is in a great meaſure buried in oblivion with the circumſtances of his life. And, conſidering the different genius of the Poets, and of the ages when they lived, we ought not to expect from Homer and the Heroic times (could we know them better), any ſhare of that artful and refined complimentary alluſion, which is the particular excellence of the moſt poliſhed writer of the Auguſtan age. The Greek Poet, leſs *courtly*, and therefore *more natural*, whoſe philoſophy acknowledged no ſect, and whoſe politicks knew no party, ever aims at original reſemblance in his pictures, with an impartiality which his patriotiſm

patriotiſm did not biaſs, and to which, I think we may venture to ſay, his moral gave way; for in the great variety of the Iliad and Odyſſey, I ſee very little complimentary preference to his countrymen, and not one perfect character ſet up as a model for imitation: now, ſhould it be alledged that he has followed truth and nature, both as to facts and characters, too cloſely, for what has been ſince laid down as the ultimate object of the epic plan, viz. the inſtruction and reformation of mankind, ſurely this is much in his favour as an *Hiſtorian*.

But, though Virgil found the voyage of his Hero ſufficiently eſtabliſhed in the minds of a people credulouſly prediſpoſed towards this favourite object of national prejudice, he appears to have been very cautious of endangering its credit, by departing from any of the prevailing popular traditions which related to that event; and though the obſcurity and contradiction, in which the incidents of this ſuppoſed migration were involved, gave him ſcope in the choice of his materials, he made a very ſparing uſe of it; for he ſeldom ventures to introduce an extraordinary circumſtance that we cannot trace to ſome previous authority; and he gives ſome things a place in his poem, for which we can ſee no temptation but their contributing to ſupport the truth of his ſubject.

The *divine miſſion* of his Hero offers a ready ſolution of many of the objections to his eſtabliſhment in Italy, and is made reſponſible for all the abſurdity and injuſtice with which his enemies ſo naturally charge that undertaking. *Auguriis agimur Divum* is the ſhort account he gives of the deſertion of his own country; and much the ſame apology is made to Latinus for the invaſion of his: a language adapted with great propriety to the grand purpoſe of the Poet, who inſinuating, to a vain and ſuperſtitious people, a favourable idea of a late change of government, artfully conciliates reverence and reſpect to the common origin and connected intereſts of their *civil* and *religious* conſtitution; and with this view the pious duties of *Faith*, *Reſignation*, and *Obedience*, are highly finiſhed in the Character of his *predeſtined* Hero.

But though the eſtabliſhed religion and public annals of Rome ſeemed to have tolerably well ſecured the credit of a fact, which the Emperor's vanity was eager to encourage, and popular prejudice not leſs zealous to ſupport; yet Virgil did not care to truſt impartial poſterity with Homer's ſhort account of this matter, and diſcovers the moſt genuine compliment to the Greek Poet's hiſtorical character, in a ſly evaſion of its authority; for he adopts the paſſage from the Iliad, and by changing a ſyllable in one word, he converts the ſtrongeſt voucher againſt the voyage of Æneas, into a prophetic teſtimony in its favour [x].

It was ſtill neceſſary to ſoften another ſtriking objection, to which the Hero's ſettlement in Italy was liable. The colony he was ſaid to have conducted and eſtabliſhed there, retained no marks of their

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[x] (ΠΑΝτεσσιν for ΤΡΩεσσιν), Whether Virgil was the author of this *pious fraud*, or adopted it from others, is immaterial; I am rather inclined to the firſt of thoſe conjectures, for reaſons which I ſhall lay before the claſſical Reader, if he thinks this note worth his peruſal. The text, in all the manuſcripts hitherto diſcovered, ſtands thus;

Νυν δε δη Αινειαο βιη ΤΡΩεσσιν αναξει,
Και παιδες παιδων, τοι κεν μεταπισθε γενωνται.

Strabo ſays, that thoſe who apply this paſſage to the Romans, write it thus;

Νυν δε δη Αινειαο γενεη ΠΑΝτεσσιν αναξει;

Which Virgil tranſlates,

Hic domus Æneæ cunctis dominabitur oris.

This correction was therefore ſuggeſted, in order to reconcile Homer to the Roman Hiſtory. Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, who has been at moſt pains to ſupport the Trojan origin of Rome, taking thoſe lines of Homer into conſideration, mentions no ſuch reading: we may therefore with probability ſuppoſe it to have been thought of *after* Dionyſius and *before* Strabo. This period coincides with Virgil's time of writing the Æneid, and at that time preciſely the Roman conqueſts authorized a correction of the text, which propheſied their being maſters of the world.

their Trojan origin; nor did the deſcendents of thoſe conquerors preſerve the leaſt remains of the *manners*, *cuſtoms*, *language*, or even *name*, of their ſuppoſed anceſtors, at the ſame time that they differed greatly from them, both in the *modes* and *objects* of their worſhip.

The Romans would perhaps, of all nations, be leaſt ſenſible of the force of this objection: as no people was ever leſs bigoted to their own manners, or more apt to adopt thoſe of their conquered enemies: yet Virgil ſaw, that ſo very unnatural a neglect of the mother country, and ſo unaccountable a compliment to the inhabitants of a new conqueſt, could not paſs unnoticed; he therefore cloſes the poem with the following piece of machinery, perfectly well calculated for a ſolution of thoſe difficulties.

As Turnus and Æneas are preparing for the final deciſion by ſingle combat, Jupiter makes a conciliating overture to Juno, and expoſtulates with her upon the inutility of endleſs oppoſition to the decrees of Fate,

" Quæ jam finis erit, conjux? quid denique reſtat?
" Indigitem Æneam ſcis ipſa, et ſcire fateris
" *Deberi cælo, fatiſque ad ſidera tolli.*
" Quid ſtruis? *&c.*"

He then intreats her to deſiſt; and firſt, putting her in mind of the unhappy lengths to which her paſſion had been already indulged, he concludes with a poſitive injunction to proceed no further;

" Ulterius tentare veto."

The goddeſs, who could *retard*, but not *control*, the will of Jove, anſwers ſubmiſſively, apologizes for her paſt conduct, and promiſes to renounce the cauſe; but annexes the following condition,

" Ne vetus indigenas *nomen* mutare Latinos,
" Neu *Troas* fieri jubeas, *Teucroſque* vocari,
" Aut *voces* mutare viros, aut vertere *veſtes*, *&c.*"

Jupiter grants the terms, and declares,

" *Sermonem* Auſonii patrium *moreſque* tenebunt;
" Utque eſt, *nomen* erit: commixti corpore tantum
" Subſident Teucri: *morem rituſque ſacrorum*
" Adjiciam; faciamque omnes *uno ore Latinos*, *&c.*"

Here we ſee the want of affinity between the language, manners, name, and religious rites and ceremonies, of Troy and Rome, is accounted for by no leſs than a decree of Jupiter: but there ſtill remained a very embarraſſing difficulty in the Poet's way. The Æneid is like the Iliad, full of machinery; but Virgil's imitation of Homer, in this particular, lay under two very great diſadvantages: the *firſt*, of which we have before taken notice, was, that the *ſcenery* of Homer's Mythology was fixed in Greece, and adapted to the action of the Iliad: the *ſecond* was, that the *characters* of the Dramatis Perſonæ of this Mythology were eſtabliſhed, and their different *parts* in the Trojan ſtory allotted, not as Virgil could have wiſhed. Without entering into the particular paſſages where he is embarraſſed by thoſe circumſtances, I ſhall only obſerve, that being by this means deprived of the uſe of Minerva, who is ſo properly employed in the Odyſſey, he is obliged to put his *pious legiſlative Hero* under the protection of *Venus*; for the ſame reaſon, Juno muſt be the inveterate enemy of Troy, and takes an active part againſt the eſtabliſhment of the Roman empire. This produces, no doubt, the happieſt alluſions to ſome of the moſt intereſting parts of the Roman Hiſtory; but we muſt ſuppoſe that her firſt appearance in this hoſtile character, at the opening of the poem, muſt have been an aukward circumſtance, when we conſider that the Juno Romana was at that time a favourite Divinity of Rome. It was not proper that the reader

ſhould

ſhould wait for the unraveling of the poem to have this matter explained; he is therefore apprized in the firſt book, that this enmity of the Goddeſs is to be converted into protection and regard; and Jupiter promiſes,

" Conſilia in *melius* referet; *mecumque fovebit*
" *Romanos* rerum dominos, *&c.*"

Accordingly towards the concluſion of the laſt book this reconciliation is effected:

" *Annuit* his Juno, et *mentem lætata retorſit.*"

The great point being thus ſettled, Turnus is killed, and the poem ends.

From this digreſſion on the conduct of the Roman Poet, with regard to the event which he choſe for his ſubject, I would infer, that, notwithſtanding the prejudices of Rome in its favour, he was apprehenſive of objections, which might be drawn as well from Homer's authority, as from the incredible ſingularity of a colony's retaining no traces of the *Names, Language, Dreſs*, or *Religous rites*, of their anceſtors.

HOMER'S CHRONOLOGY.

IN the enlarged plan of this work, I propoſe to connect this with the preceding Section; applying Homer's Chronology to the *three periods*, into which we have divided his Hiſtory, but dwelling particularly upon that which includes the action of the Iliad: what I have at preſent to offer, in general, on this head, is as follows.

The Greek Calendar was not formed in Homer's age; his time is meaſured by the periodical returns of the ſun, moon, and ſeaſons, of light and darkneſs, labour and reſt; but we find no political diſtribution of it, no weeks, hours, or minutes, no alluſion to dials, clepſydras, or any other mode of computation introduced before the invention of pendulums, the moſt exact of all chronometers. His day is ſubdivided by the occupations which convenience had allotted to the different parts of it in rude ſociety; a mode of computation taken more from nature than art, and therefore more poetical than accurate; the ſtate of property did not require more exactneſs. The diviſion of the year into 365 days was not brought from Egypt (a country of ſettled police) into Greece till the time of Plato.

There was no æra in Greece before that of the Olympiads; therefore no Chronology: nor was this ſcience made uſe of to range facts in their due order of time, till after the beſt Greek hiſtorians [y]. The Chronicle of Paros (that curious original piece of hiſtory, of which the Univerſity of Oxford is in poſſeſſion) takes no notice of Olympiads, though 265 years earlier than Chriſt. 'Tis true Timæus uſed this æra. However, Chronology cannot be ſaid to have been treated as a Science before Eratoſthenes: who gave Greece that ſyſtem which has been followed above 2000 years, till the original genius of Newton, as true to Nature in the inveſtigation of her ſecret powers, as Homer was in delineating her external forms and Proportions, corrected Eratoſthenes upon his own principles, and by arguments to which that Philoſopher would himſelf have ſubmitted.

I cannot help thinking, that it was unfortunate for letters, that the firſt among the antients, who undertook to range the facts of Greek hiſtory in that order which was adopted by ſucceeding hiſtorians, did not take Homer into his conſideration. Whether this ingenious Philoſopher, who lived at a time, when the Poet was the object of much blind admiration, might not have been diſguſted at the idle compliments paid to his ſcience, we cannot pretend to ſay: but he certainly took more pains to expoſe Homer's ignorance, than it is eaſy to account for otherwiſe. The reſpectable authorities to which we have appealed in the preceding ſection, as vouchers for his facts, may

[y] Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon.

may with equal propriety, be called in evidence, for the order of time in which he has placed them: and the early Chronology of the Greeks muſt be drawn from the ſame ſource which has furniſhed the firſt events in their Hiſtory.

May I venture to add, that it is alſo to be regretted, that Sir Iſaac Newton, the ornament of our country and of this age, who has corrected the plan of Eratoſthenes upon his own principles, ſhould not have conſulted our Poet? Had the relaxations of that extraordinary Genius from more ſevere and important ſtudies permitted him to have conſidered Homer in the light we have attempted to place him, I am perſuaded, that he would have conceived ſo differently of the Heroic State of arts and ſciences, that he would not have mentioned Chiron, and his daughter Hippo, as practical aſtronomers, or have ſuppoſed, that, before the ſiege of Troy, they had either inſtruments fit to take an obſervation, or knowledge to uſe them. Had he (as I have attempted) followed the Argonauts in their obſcure expedition, he would have ſeen, that a ſphere, whether invented by Chiron or Muſæus, could have been but of little uſe to them, in that coaſting navigation. On the other hand, he would have found Homer's authority very favourable to his idea of curtailing the Greek antiquity: for, notwithſtanding the pains which have been taken, to ſhew the Poet's partiality to Greece, as his country, he left nothing on record that could flatter the Athenian vanity upon this head. Sir Iſaac Newton would alſo have found the Poet entirely coincide with him, in that part of his ſyſtem, which contracts the diſtance of time between the Argonautic Expedition and the Siege of Troy. He would indeed have ſeen the whole Homeric hiſtory, antecedent to this laſt epoch, contained in a very narrow compaſs, not going much further back than the life of Neſtor: but he would alſo have ſeen that ſhort period ſo full of circumſtantial narrative, and ſo replete with facts, connected with and relative to one another, that, with whatever degree of poetical exaggeration they have been magnified, the circumſtantial connection and conſiſtence of the whole are too well aſcertained, not to ſuppoſe, that they were derived from real events, and eſtabliſhed by oral tradition, before the Poet meddled with them.

With regard to Homer's age (a matter of as much obſcurity as his country) if we are allowed to purſue the ſame method of founding conjectures upon this head on his writings, we ſhall fix it to about half a century from the taking of Troy. He would, in that caſe, have had an opportunity of ſeeing and converſing with ſome of the old men, who had been engaged in that ſiege; as he lived with their immediate deſcendants, his cotemporaries, and ſaw their grandchildren, which made the *fourth generation* from Æneas.

I have already obſerved, that it would have been both difficult and uſeleſs for him to have forged that account of the family of Æneas, from which I draw this conjecture with regard to his own age; nor do I believe any teſtimony can be produced, of equal authority with this paſſage of the Iliad, for placing him nearer the Trojan war: but I muſt confeſs, my inducements for fixing him preciſely to that, rather than to any later period, are not ſo well founded. They are of this kind. Firſt, It is the character, indeed I may venture to ſay it is among the faults of Homer, to be minutely deſcriptive. He frequently introduces ſuperfluous circumſtances of meer preciſion, rather than leave his object vague and uncircumſcribed; even where a general view of it would have been ſufficient, perhaps preferable. In ſhort, his genius for *imitation*, and his love of *truth*, ſeem to carry him too far into the province of painting; whoſe peculiar privilege it is to be *minute* and *circumſtantial*, without becoming *dull* or *tedious*. I am therefore inclined to think, that, though the time we allude to may be ſuppoſed to apply to the poſterity of Æneas in general, the Poet had in view that particular generation of the deſcendants of thoſe who fought at Troy, with whom he lived and converſed, and who are ſo diſtinctly pointed out by this paſſage, taken in the literal ſenſe. In the next place; his picture of ſociety agrees beſt with that early ſtage of it. Thoſe, who bring down Homer as low as Lycurgus, (I fancy, becauſe the idea of an interview between two ſuch perſonages has ſomething pleaſing in it) do not conſider, that ſuch a Poet and ſuch a Legiſlator do not properly belong to the ſame ſtate of manners. And laſtly; his account of perſons, and facts, could not have paſſed through many hands; for his manner, not only of deſcribing actions and characters, but of drawing portraits, looks very much as if he had been preſent, or at leaſt had taken his information from eye-witneſſes.

I ſhould

I ſhould not preſume to oppoſe this reaſoning to Hiſtorical Authority; but where the whole is ſo much conjecture, it is allowable to offer what appears moſt plauſible. It is true, Homer is, in general, placed at a greater diſtance after the Siege of Troy: but Herodotus, who makes him about four hundred years older than himſelf, ſuppoſes that he converſed with Mentor in Ithaca, who was perſonally acquainted with Ulyſſes.

However, our ſubject leads us to conſider rather the agreement between the action of the Iliad, and the time it employs, than the Chronological order of the Poet's facts, or the time when he lived. I have already ventured to ſay, that, if we examine that Poem, as a journal of the Siege of Troy, ſtripped of its poetical embelliſhments, we ſhall find it, in general, a conſiſtent narrative of events, related according to the circumſtances of time and place, when and where they happened: our map of Troy is propoſed as the trueſt teſt of this matter.

The action of the Iliad is of days, of which twenty paſs before the armies engage, four in battles, one in burying the dead, and one in building the fortifications: the remaining days are chiefly employed in the mourning and funeral rites of Patroclus and Hector. As the action is more animated and intereſting, his time is more minutely marked and divided; though he is extremely exact in marking time as a circumſtance of truth, which gives probability to his deſcription, he is indifferent about any other duration for his action, than that which tradition had aſſigned it: indeed, the ſtrongeſt mark of his original character is ſeen in the manner in which he treats the circumſtances of time and place; for, while he is accurate and conſiſtent with regard to both, it is only by particular examination, that we make this diſcovery. And it ſeems never to have entered into his head, to give a map of Troy, or a journal of the ſiege; they are taken for granted, and as things already known; had this been his view, he has executed it to very little purpoſe; for I will venture to ſay, that Boſſu, Pope, Dacier, &c. are miſtaken as to his time; nor has his ſcene of action been minutely underſtood by any writer, I know of, Strabo excepted.

This exactneſs extends to his machinery, and to do it juſtice we muſt take his Gods into the Dramatis Perſonæ: it is alſo as remarkable by night as by day; and the ſame rule is obſerved, of uſing more preciſion as the action is more intereſting. The journey of Priam and the aged Herald to the tent of Achilles, and the excurſion of Ulyſſes and Diomede to the Trojan Camp, are beautiful inſtances of this. And here let me obſerve, that the ſevereſt ſtruggle for victory is on the day after thoſe exploits of Ulyſſes and Diomede: they could not be abſent when the whole was at ſtake; yet they do not appear, till they have had time for that repoſe, which the extraordinary fatigues of the preceding night made neceſſary; and till the fortune of the day took that critical turn, which called for them.

I muſt own, it requires great patience to form a diſtinct idea of the days of battle: the reader wiſhes to haſten through thoſe confuſed ſcenes of bloodſhed and ſlaughter; and though his eye is now and then caught by a detached groupe, or ſingle figure, he admires it ſeparately, without ſeeing its connection with the whole compoſition. I have already obſerved the advantage, which Painting has over Poetical imitation, in being diſtinct by the help of minute circumſtances: but even in the beſt painted battle-piece this diſtinct expreſſion is confined to a few principal figures in the fore-ground. But, without entering into any apology for Homer (which I think even the manners of his age will not furniſh), I will venture to ſay, that his deſcriptions of this ſort become leſs tedious, and more intereſting, as we become more acquainted with the time and place of the action.

As to that propriety, with which his times and ſeaſons are, in general, adapted to his facts, it will appear through this Hiſtory, when it comes to be extended in the manner above propoſed. The detention of the Greeks in the Euripus, and of Menelaus at Pharos, will fall in with the ſeaſon of the Eteſians, which produce the ſame effects in the ſame places to this day. If I ſhould differ from the common opinion, in not bringing the Greeks to Troy ſoon after they ſailed from Aulis, though the paſſage be but of three days, it ſhall be upon the authority of the Poet, who employs the Greeks in ſeveral other operations before they enter the Helleſpont.

If,

If, contrary to ſome other opinions, I open the Iliad in the Dog-days, it is, firſt, becauſe it correſponds with the operations of the tenth year of the ſiege, which are there deſcribed; and, in the next place, becauſe in a marſhy ſituation, like that of Troy, unwholeſome at this day in the height of ſummer, nothing could be more probable and natural than the fever of a crowded camp, when the ſun was moſt powerful: and this I take to have been the plague which Apollo ſent among the Greeks. If I reject the opinion of Scaliger, and others, who ſuppoſe, that the town was taken in Spring; it is, becauſe they are contradicted by various paſſages in the Iliad: and though we ſhould allow Virgil, or Petronius, (who are called in aid upon this occaſion) to be ſufficient authority in ſuch a caſe, ſtill it will not operate in Scaliger's favour; for though they both ſuppoſe the town taken about the full moon, this does not decide the ſeaſon of the year; and as Æneas ſails, according to Virgil, the very beginning of the Summer, we cannot ſuppoſe, that he could cut down his timber, and build a fleet of twenty ſhips, in a few days; but if we allow him the Winter for that purpoſe, it will agree with Probability and Homer.

But if, laying aſide the Hiſtory of Æneas, and the anachroniſm of Dido, we examine the ſubordinate events of the Greek and Roman Poets, ſtripping them of their poetical dreſs, we ſhall find more narrative preciſion and conſiſtence in the firſt; and that the action of the Æneid, though leſs varied by incidents than that of the Iliad or Odyſſey, is not ſo naturally connected by probable circumſtances.

As to its duration, notwithſtanding all the Commentators have ſaid to clear it up, it remains vague and unſettled, I fear, contradictory: for Æneas arrives at Carthage in the *ſeventh* ſummer of his voyages; and the next year he ſolemnizes the funeral games in Sicily, in the *ſeventh* year after the deſtruction of Troy. If he is right in the *firſt* calculation, he muſt be at leaſt a year miſtaken in the *laſt*.

Nor is a want of diſtinct Chronology the only defect in the account of Æneas's voyages. If we examine them with a view to that chain of conſiſtent circumſtances, which are as eſſential to Poetical as Hiſtorical truth, we ſhall be diſappointed. Caſſandra had laid open to Anchiſes the deſtination of his family for Italy. It is pointed out to Æneas in various manners, but moſt explicitly foretold by Creüſa's ghoſt; who not only informs him, that he is to go to Italy, but deſcribes the part of it where he is to reign: yet, in a few lines after, we ſee the Trojans embark, "incerti quò fata vocant." Æneas turns his back upon this promiſed land, and ſails for Thrace; which, though in his neighbourhood, he deſcribes as a diſtant country. The contrivance for his leaving it is out of nature, and againſt hiſtory: and when he ſails from thence to Delos, to get information with regard to what had been already explained, it is with a wind which could not carry him thither.

Should we proceed in examining the whole action of the Æneid in this manner, we might obſerve little inaccuracies of the ſame kind, which are not to be found ſo frequently in Homer: but the inſtances, I have produced in the courſe of this Eſſay, are ſufficient to ſhew that difference of character in the compoſitions of thoſe great Poets, the only object of this compariſon; which is not propoſed as a teſt of their merit; nor are they brought together in the ſpirit of thoſe Commentators, who think they cannot advance the reputation of the one, but at the expence of the other. I conſider Homer and Virgil, as the moſt perfect models, that any age or country has yet produced; leſs different in their Genius than their Fortunes: for had Virgil written firſt, I doubt not but Homer would have copied him. Indeed, the importance of meer priority, if properly conſidered, will appear much greater than we are apt to imagine. Thoſe, who have obſerved, how ſmall a part of mankind think for themſelves, how much our taſtes are formed upon authority, and our likings governed by habit, muſt ſee the great advantage of getting once into full poſſeſſion of general admiration.

Though Homer was born with a genius, that muſt have figured, if not taken the lead, in any age; and wrote under greater advantages than ever fell to the lot of any other Poet; there is ſtill a peculiar circumſtance of meer good fortune that attended his productions, to which they perhaps owe more reputation than to their intrinſick value: *viz.* that they were preſented to the golden age of letters, by the moſt acute and diſtinguiſhing genius of that or

any

any other period; who was allowed to judge for the reſt of the world, both in matters of Taſte and Philoſophy, for above two thouſand years.

Could I preſume to oppoſe opinions which have been long reſpected, I ſhould attempt to account for that chain of connected truth, which is more obſervable in Homer than in Virgil, from the different objects which thoſe Poets had in view. That it was their intention, both to pleaſe and inſtruct, is not to be doubted: but in what degree thoſe different motives prevailed in each of them, when they did not coincide, has been much diſputed. We have been told, that Homer's great object was, to make mankind, and particularly his countrymen, wiſer and better; that the Iliad, in which he teaches the bleſſings of Order and Union, and the miſchiefs of Ambition and Diſcord, is in this view addreſſed to the whole Greek Confederacy; and that, in the Odyſſey, he lays down the principles of Political prudence, for the uſe of each particular ſtate. We have alſo heard much of thoſe ſecrets of Nature, and that Phyſical Philoſophy, which he is ſuppoſed to have wrapt up in Allegory; of that Fertility of Imagination, which could clothe the Properties of Elements, the Qualifications of the Mind, the Virtues and Vices, in Forms and Perſons, and introduce them into Actions, agreeable to the nature of the things they ſhadowed[a].

I could wiſh, that thoſe, who think ſo highly of the myſterious wiſdom of the Antients, and take ſo much pains to explain their dark mode of conveying profound knowledge, would tell us, by what method they acquired it. I can eaſily conceive a connection between *Myſtery* and *Falſhood* or *Ignorance*; but I do not ſee what it has to do with *Truth* or *Knowledge*.

When therefore I admit, that one of theſe Poets had a deeper purpoſe than the other, I differ totally from thoſe, who apply this to Homer, and conſider the meaning of the Æneid, as more obvious, plain, and ſimple, than that of the Iliad, or Odyſſey: nor can I help thinking (without offence to the Father of Criticiſm) that Homer found great part of his Moral in his Fable; and did not, like Virgil, entirely invent a Fable for his Moral. If then the Greek Poet only adorned the Facts he took from Hiſtory, they would naturally retain the ſame conſiſtence in his compoſitions, which they had already acquired in the opinion of the world: for it is the nature of oral tradition, the only mode of recording events then known, to magnify, and embelliſh, rather than ſuppreſs, or pervert truth. But Virgil, who intended a panegyrick upon his Prince, and a compliment to his country, looked for a Fable moſt ſuitable to that plan. We cannot therefore do juſtice to his *invention*, without entering into the extent of his views, and the difficulties he had to encounter in carrying them into execution: for while he copied *Nature* through *Homer*, he was to accommodate what he borrowed from *both* to the fortunes of Rome, and the character of Auguſtus.

Such are the conſiderations, I would offer to thoſe, who are fond of comparing Homer and Virgil; not as a diſcouragement to our making ſuch a compariſon, (which is curious and inſtructive, and affords, I think, the higheſt of all claſſical entertainment;) but to ſhew the caution, with which we muſt proceed, in order to do juſtice to both Poets, and to explode that illiberal ſpirit of Criticiſm, which has too much prevailed among the Commentators, who are conſtantly complimenting the one, by finding fault with the other.

HOMER'S LANGUAGE AND LEARNING.

IT is much to be regretted, that thoſe, who are in other reſpects ſo well qualified to throw light on this part of our ſubject, by not taking into their conſideration the Poet's Age and Manners, have given a very miſtaken idea of the *Genius and Character of his Language*. Profeſſed Scholars, and Criticks in the Greek Tongue, confine their obſervations principally to it's ſtate of Perfection[b], without conſidering how long Homer lived before that period.—They compliment him for

[a] See Pope's Eſſay on Homer.

[b] This was not till after the Perſian Invaſion, when the Greeks were rouzed to a ſenſe of liberty, to which we may, in a great meaſure, attribute more great actions and more elegant compoſitions than

for having *enriched* his language with the different *Dialects* of Greece; though the diſtinction of Dialects can be only known to a cultivated, and, in ſome degree, ſettled ſtate of language, as deviations from an acknowledged Standard [c].—They point out his *Poetical Licences*; forgetting that, in his time, there were no compoſitions in Proſe.—They ſettle his *Pronunciation* by an Alphabet [d] which he did not know, and by Characters he never ſaw.—His *Proſody* [e], or muſical Expreſſion, was ſoon corrupted; for it is remarkable that the old chaſte Greek Melody was loſt in refinement, before their other Arts had acquired perfection. Could Homer have heard his Poems ſung or, recited, even at the Pnathenæan Feſtival, I dare ſay, he would have been offended at the *Elegance*, perhaps the *Affectation*, of the Attic Accent and Articulation; not to mention the various changes to which Greek Pronunciation has been expoſed.—When I arrived at Athens, I ſent for the Schoolmaſter of the place, and we went through part of the Iliad together: I make no doubt but Homer would have been as much at a loſs to underſtand his own Works, read by us, as we were to underſtand one another.

Hiſtory cannot point out a period when the language of Greece, like that of Rome, and moſt other countries, was confined to a ſingle State, or Community; in what proportion it was *original*; or of *foreign extraction*; in what degree a *Northern* or *Oriental* Mixture entered into its Compoſition, or which part of the Greek continent, or iſlands, gave it *Birth*, and firſt diſtinguiſhed it by a *Name*, will ever remain the obſcure queſtions of Antiquaries. But ſo far we know, that in its early and unpoliſhed ſtate, it was the language of various independent tribes; who, being all intereſted in the

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than any other nation ever produced; the diſtinction of Greek and Barbarian was unknown to Homer, and his ſuppoſed partiality to the former ſeems to have as little foundation as the political plan of his Poem. But *Eſchylus*, who fought at *Marathon*, *Salamis*, and *Platæa*, who had one brother killed and another wounded at the ſecond place; *Sophocles*, who was a ſoldier; and *Euripides*, who was born amidſt the triumphs of his countrymen for victory obtained in defence of their free government; looked down upon the Aſiatick character with a conſcious dignity and ſuperiority, which, though it breathes through their writings, Homer never felt, and therefore could not expreſs. Virgil did not attend to this diſtinction, and even the Hero of the Æneid lets ſlip ſome alluſion to the term *Barbarian*, which is the effect of this negligence:

" Quinquaginta illi thalami, ſpes tanta nepotum,
" *Barbarico* poſtes auro ſpoliiſque ſuperbi,
" Procubuere." Æn. ii. 504.

[c] Nor would it be judicious to employ them indifferently. The Bergamaſc, Neapolitan, and Venetian dialects, do well on the Italian Stage in the mouths of Harlequino, Pulcinello, and Pantalone; but a Tuſcan would never think of *enriching* his language by uſing them promiſcuouſly in an Epic Poem.

[d] Without entering into a doubt whether Homer was acquainted with *writing* (of which hereafter), it is allowed that all the letters of the preſent Greek Alphabet were not known in his time. Take away the only diphthongs and the two long vowels from Homer, which could not have been uſed in the firſt copies of his works, and ſee how much the pronunciation will be puzzled for want of the powers of letters of a later invention: now, as the introduction of *new letters* into the Alphabet implies the introduction of *new ſounds*, (for *additional* letters to expreſs the *ſame* tones would be no improvement) how are we to gueſs at the true original pronunciation?

[e] Much has been written on Homer's *Proſody*; but to ſo little purpoſe, that even the meaning of that word is not aſcertained; nor is it clear in what degree the Προσῳδίαι of the antients belonged to *Muſick* or to *Grammar*: or, if they were *at firſt* entirely muſical (which I think highly probable) when they were adopted to fix pronunciation. Could we underſtand the real uſe of thoſe *marks* which we call *accents*, it is probable that all we ſhould learn by it would be to know, and that imperfectly, how the Grammarians of the Alexandrian School read Homer, and how Greek was pronounced by thoſe who ſtudied it as a dead or foreign language. I do not mean to depreciate ſome late ingenious Diſſertations on Greek Accent and Quantity; I wiſh men of ſuch learning and abilities would proceed in their enquiries on this head; and particularly that they would attempt to ſettle the meaning, if poſſible, of the terms belonging to Greek muſick, and Greek pronunciation, which are cloſely united, but little underſtood.

the common ſtock, contributed towards its increaſe and improvement, according to their different circumſtances and fortunes.

It appears from Homer, that, before the Siege of Troy, it had ſpread conſiderably, not only over the continent, and iſlands of Greece, but on the Aſiatick ſide of the Mediterranean. We may alſo conclude from him, that it was the language of Troy[f]. Indeed, if we enquire critically into the hiſtory of Greek compoſition, we muſt look for their firſt productions of this kind in the neighbourhood of the Troade, before Athens had given any indications of the figure ſhe afterwards made in Letters.—Orpheus, Muſæus, Eumolpus, and Thomyris, were of Thrace; and Marſyas, Olympus, Midas, &c. were of the Ionian ſide of the Mæander.

A language formed, at leaſt improved, under the rival patronage of ſo many ſeparate ſtates, is a ſingularity, which it is leſs difficult to account for in a cluſter of ſmall iſlands, almoſt ſurrounded by a broken and divided continent. The ſame diſtribution of land and water, which furniſhed Homer with ſo much pictureſque ſcenery, was alſo well calculated for a variety of little ſettlements, diſtinct and independent of each other, within a narrow compaſs, and therefore capable of more intercourſe, with leſs jealouſy, than the contiguous poſſeſſions, and diſputable boundaries of an extended plain country would admit.

I cannot help conſidering thoſe ſeparate nurſeries of the Greek language, as a circumſtance which moſt materially promoted its *Progreſs*, by raiſing a competition, and ſecured its *Duration*, by affording refuge and protection againſt the perſecution and diſcouragements of any particular ſtate; and I think we may venture to aſſign this as one of the cauſes, which afterwards contributed towards carrying Literature farther in Greece, than it has gone in any other country.

We ſhall perhaps find, that the particular period in this progreſs, which fell to Homer's lot, though not the moſt advanced, was not, for that reaſon, the leſs adapted to the purpoſes of that *Original Character*, which is now under our conſideration: nor will it, upon examination, appear ſo extraordinary, that, *while* Manners were rude, *when* Arts were little cultivated, and *before* Science was reduced to general Principles, *then* Poetry had required a greater degree of Perfection than it has *ever ſince* attained.

We have already ſeen, in our review of Homer's ſtate of Society, an uniformity of Manners, previous to the diſtinction of Rank and Condition, which produced that noble ſimplicity of language unknown to poliſhed ages. Though the venerable beauties of that antiquated ſtyle muſt, in ſome degree, ſtrike every Reader, yet we cannot do it juſtice without looking back to the times it deſcribes; it is only from a knowledge of thoſe early times, that we improve a reliſh of its Beauties, and find an apology for its Faults.

As to the Poet's *Learning*, I muſt own, that very different accounts are given of it, even by ſome of his beſt Commentators; and great pains have been taken to ſhew, not only that he was extenſively acquainted with the Arts both of Uſe and Elegance, but that he was knowing in the ſecrets of deep and abſtruſe Science.

I know of no authority to which we can appeal, in this caſe, of equal weight with Homer himſelf; it is from him alone that we have formed our ideas of that ſameneſs in the purſuits and occupations of mankind in the Heroic ages, which is the genuine character of an early ſtage of Society. Trades and Profeſſions were not yet divided into ſeparate claſſes; nor was that uſeful diſtribution of Induſtry yet imagined, which alone can make Labour light, give perfection to Art, and variety to Manners; but then, as the buſineſs and pleaſures of life were rude, ſimple, and confined, they lay more open to the Poet's obſervation, and gave the greater ſcope to his Deſcriptive powers: and as he painted what he ſaw with ſo much truth, I fancy we are too apt to think he knew much more than he painted.

But

[f] See Strabo, on the affinity of the Thracian and Trojan language.

But I wonder, that thoſe who have conceived ſo highly of the Poet's Science, ſhould not have attempted to ſettle a queſtion, which ſeems ſo neceſſary towards forming a juſt judgment on that head, as that, *Whether or no the uſe of Writing was known to Homer?*

I am aware of the ſmile which I ſhall raiſe, by the moſt diſtant inſinuation that *Homer could neither read nor write*; and by ſuppoſing, that ſo perfect a piece of compoſition as the Iliad or Odyſſey could be the production of a country, which had not the uſe of an Alphabet; however, this may not appear altogether ſo paradoxical, if we conſider how much the one is the work of *Genius*, and the other of *Art*. Poetry is found in ſavage life; and, even there, is not without thoſe magic powers over our paſſions, which is the boaſted character of its more perfect ſtate. But the art of opening and eſtabliſhing that wonderful familiar intercourſe between the ſenſes of Hearing and Seeing, by means of arbitrary marks that have no reſemblance to the idea which is by agreement affixed to them, muſt have been the reſult of much deep Thought and Reflection. I am not ſurprized that Antiquity, however fond of tracing every Art up to its Inventor, ſhould attribute that of Writing to the Gods. If the invention of Printing is ingenious, what ſhall we ſay to that of Letters? But indeed we treat this invaluable gift of Art, which we are in conſtant uſe of, as we do ſome of the greateſt gifts of Nature, which we daily enjoy, without juſt attention, or reſpect either for the ingenuity or utility of the contrivance.

If we conſult the Poet on this queſtion, it muſt appear very remarkable, that, in ſo comprehenſive a picture of Civil Society as that which he has left us, there is nothing that conveys an idea of *Writing*; none of the various terms, which language has borrowed from either of thoſe Arts, are to be found in Homer. All compoſition was addreſſed to an *Audience*; nor is there any alluſion to *Written Laws*, *Treaties*, *Contracts*, of any kind; no Written *Records*, no *Monumental Inſcriptions*; in ſhort, no *Letters*, or *Alphabet*. As to *Symbolical*, *Hieroglyphical* or *Picture Writing*, ſomething of that kind was no doubt known to Homer, of which the letter [g] (as it is called) which Bellerephon carried to the King of Lycia is a proof. The Mexicans, though a civilized people, had no alphabet, but ſent Montezuma an account of the landing of the Spaniards in this *Picture writing*. As alphabetical writing is one of the moſt difficult, ſo this method of communicating thoughts by *Imitation* is one of the moſt obvious of all inventions. The firſt efforts of our infant expreſſion are of the *mimetick* kind; and the names of the conſtellations among moſt natives are a proof of our natural diſpoſition to explain by *animal reſemblances*. Though I will not conclude, that Homer did not know that which is not taken notice of in his writings (a manner of reaſoning which has been carried too far upon other occaſions); yet I cannot help thinking, his ſilence on this head ſhould have ſome weight.

If it is aſked, At what time then did the Greeks find out the Alphabet? for, according to this account of it, the interval between Homer and the Perſian Invaſion was not equal to ſuch a diſcovery, and at that period the uſe of Writing was familiarly known in Greece. The anſwer is, That it was not of Greek invention; the expreſs authority of Herodotus in favour of Phœnicia deſerves the more credit, as it contradicts the known vanity of his countrymen: beſides, the reſemblance between the old Eaſtern and firſt Greek Character ſeems to put this out of diſpute. Now, as the uſe of an Alphabet, though difficult to find out, when once found is eaſily communicated, the time of its introduction into Greece will depend leſs upon the degree of civilization of that country, and the progreſs of its own knowledge, than upon the commencement, the nature, and the extent, of its intercourſe and connection with Phœnicia, and the South-Eaſt part of the Mediterranean.

But there is a ſingular circumſtance in the Hiſtory of Greek Literature, which, if properly conſidered, will, I think, throw ſome light on this ſubject. It is allowed on all hands, that Proſe writing was unknown in Greece, till long after the Poet's time; and that, down to Cadmus the Mileſian, and Pherecydes of Syros, (the firſt of Ionia, and the laſt of its neighbourhood) all compoſition was in Verſe. After much refined and unſatisfactory modern reaſoning on this head, I beg leave to go back to the plain account of it, which Ariſtotle [h] long ſince ſuggeſted; when, enquiring why the ſame word in Greek ſignified a *Song* and a *Law*, he aſked whether it was not becauſe, before the invention of *Writing*, laws were *ſung*, that they might not be *forgotten*, according to the practice

[g] σημαῖα λυγρα. Il. vi. 168.
[h] Problem Sect. xix. Art. 28.

tice of the Agathyrſians in his time? It would be difficult to account for ſo long a priority of Verſe to Proſe, if we ſuppoſe them to have been ſome time in poſſeſſion of an Alphabet. It is contrary to the natural order and progreſs of things to imagine, that the firſt eſſays of Alphabetical Writing ſhould be made in Verſe; and even granting its firſt application was in this way, it is unreaſonable to think that it could, for any time, be confined to that ſpecies of compoſition, and that other obvious advantages of a diſcovery ſo uſeful to ſociety ſhould be ſo long neglected. Before that invention, Verſe and Muſick were very neceſſary aids to *Memory*, then ſolely entruſted with the whole depoſit of *Law*, *Hiſtory*, and *Religion*, till the Art of Writing introduced a more faithful and comprehenſive method of recording things. We know that certain perſons were appointed to the office of *ſinging the laws*[1]. Perhaps we cannot give a better account of the policy of obliging the youths to get by heart Homer's Catalogue, and ordering his works to be publickly recited at the Panathenæan Ceremonies, than by conſidering them as regulations relative to a ſtate of ſociety ignorant of Writing, and of the materials neceſſary to it, which were extremely ſcarce even for ages after that time. If this reaſoning is admitted to have any weight, it will allow us to fix the common familiar uſe of an Alphabet in Greece, and Proſe Writing, to pretty much the ſame period, viz. about five hundred and fifty-four years before Chriſt, and about years after Homer.

The beſt account we can collect of the riſe and progreſs of knowledge in Greece correſponds with this ſtate of things. The *ſeven ſages*, ſo much celebrated for their wiſdom, have tranſmitted very little of it to poſterity; and all their works conſiſt of a few ſmart ſayings, moral ſentences, and ſcraps of poetry, which oral tradition had preſerved. *Thales* and *Pythagoras*, whoſe ſchools peopled Greece with Philoſophers, left no *writings* behind them; the ſame may be ſaid of *Socrates*, who lived ſtill later. *Theſpis* wrote no *Tragedies*, *Suſarion* no *Comedies*, and moſt probably *Æſop* no *Fables*. What is more extraordinary, *Legiſlation* was conſiderably advanced before *written laws* were known.

We are indeed told, that *Lycurgus* would not write his laws, becauſe "minds properly edu- "cated, and taught what is right to do, according to the occaſion, ſhould not be confined." But can we ſuppoſe the Author of the Spartan Conſtitution to have reaſoned in that manner?

As to the difficulty of conceiving how Homer could acquire, retain, and communicate, all he knew, without the aid of Letters; it is, I own, very ſtriking; and yet, I think, it will not appear inſurmountable, if, upon comparing the *fidelity of oral tradition*, and the *powers of memory*, with the *Poet's knowledge*, we find the *two firſt* much *greater*, and the *latter* much *leſs*, than we are apt to imagine.

But the *oral traditions* of a learned and enlightened age will greatly miſlead us, if from *them* we form our judgment on *thoſe* of a period when Hiſtory had no other reſource. What we obſerved at Palmyra puts this matter to a much fairer trial; nor can we, in this age of Dictionaries, and other technical aids to memory, judge what her uſe and powers were, at a time, when all a man could *know* was all he could *remember*. To which we may add, that in a rude and unlettered ſtate of ſociety the memory is loaded with nothing that is either uſeleſs or unintelligible; whereas modern Education employs us chiefly in getting by heart, while we are young, what we forget before we are old.

When the exertions of *Judgment* and *Fancy* depended ſo much on *Memory*, the *Muſes* were, with peculiar propriety, called the *Daughters of Mnemoſyne*; and this pedigree will, perhaps, account for Homer's addreſſing them with moſt ſolemnity, when he prepares to give the *catalogue*, or liſt of the Greek and Trojan forces; the part of his work, which he undertakes with moſt diffidence, and in which he deſpairs of ſucceeding without their aid. A modern Poet would never think of invoking his Muſe on an Arithmetical ſubject. It may be alledged againſt this, that we find the ſame invocation in Virgil upon a ſimilar occaſion. True, but beſides that his cloſe imitation of Homer may account for it, he copies him, in this inſtance, with an exception which, I think, favours

[1] See Strabo.

favours my conjecture; for he omits Homer's exaggeration of the difficulty of making out the *numbers*, though he liked the *expreſſion* ſo well, as to adopt it upon two other occaſions [k].

If therefore we take the Poet's account of things, we diſcover nothing that implies the uſe of *Writing*. This will appear more clearly from a ſhort ſtate of the kind of knowledge, which we may reaſonably ſuppoſe him to have been acquainted with.

Without Letters, it may be ſaid, there could be no effectual method, either of aſcertaining or promulgating the ſenſe of *Law*; but this correſponds exactly with the wretched ſtate of *government*, which we have deſcribed under the article of *Manners*.

Commerce conſiſted in little more than an exchange of ſuperfluities *in kind*; coins were unknown; gold, ſilver, braſs, and iron, were all uſed as marks of riches, but with little knowledge either of their relative value, or of the ſeparate mechanical uſes to which they were afterwards applied.

When Proteus takes an *account of the numbers* of his ſea calves, the manner in which he performs that operation is expreſſed by a Greek verb [l], to which there is nothing in our language literally equivalent. When therefore I ſay that he *fived* them, I take the liberty of coining a word, which, correſponding preciſely with the old Greek term, will convey to the Engliſh reader an alluſion to the origin of *Arithmetick*; for the Greek word, not uſed, that I can find, by any writer after Homer, ſeems to point out the firſt ſimple method of *Enumeration*, while the operation was confined to the *five* fingers of *one* hand, and before the *decimal* ſcale, or the Arithmetick of *two* hands, was practiſed. I don't mean to undervalue Homer's arithmetical knowledge, ſo much as to meaſure it exactly by this primive term; for though it continued to expreſs enumeration in his time, it certainly belonged to an earlier period of that art, as we find him uſe the *decimal* progreſſion; yet I doubt much, whether the method of counting upon the fingers, here alluded to, was not the only one known to Homer.

Mathematicks were introduced into Greece by Thales, and the Ionick School; all knowledge, which depends upon that ſcience, muſt have been very imperfect before that time. When therefore we conſider Homer as the Father of *Geography*, we may with juſtice admire his accurate obſervation

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[k] I ſhall lay the original and the copy before the reader.

Εσπετε νυν μοι, Μουσαι, ολυμπια δωματ' εχουσαι·
(Υμεις γαρ θεαι εστε, παρεστε τε, ιστε τε παντα·
Ημεις δε κλεος οιον ακουομεν, ουδε τι ιδμεν·)
Οιτινες ηγεμονες Δαναων και κοιρανοι ησαν.
Πληθυν δ' ουκ αν εγω μυθησομαι, ουδ' ονομηνω,
Ουδ' ει μοι δεκα μεν γλωσσαι, δεκα δε στοματ' ειεν,
Φωνη δ' αρρηκτος, χαλκειον δε μοι ητορ ενειη,
Ει μη Ολυμπιαδες Μουσαι, Διος Αιγιοχοιο
Θυγατερες, μνησαιαθ' οσοι υπο Ιλιον ηλθον. Il. ii. 484, &c.

" Pandite nunc Helicona, Deæ, cantuſque movete:
" Qui bello exciti reges; quæ quemque ſecutæ
" Complerit ecampos acies; quibus Itala jam tum
" Floruerit terra alma viris; quibus arſerit armis.
" Et meminiſtis enim, Divæ, & memorare poteſtis:
" Ad nos vix tenuis famæ perlabitur aura." Æn. vii. 641, &c.

Here Virgil omits his

" Non, mihi ſi linguæ centum ſint oraque centum,
" Ferrea vox—"

which he introduces, Georg. ii. 42. & Æneid vi. 625.

[l] στιμπασσεσθαι. Od. iv.

ſervation as a Traveller, before Maps [m] and Charts were invented; but we muſt acknowledge, that Geography, as a Science, was as much unknown to him, as *Aſtronomy*, *Trigonometry*, and other branches of the *Mathematicks* on which it depends.

When Ulyſſes launches his ſhip, we find him employ the *lever* and the *inclined plane* for that purpoſe; but are we therefore to ſuppoſe, that he knew the *mechanical powers*? or ſhall we not rather conclude, from his building that ſhip with a brazen hatchet, that the *uſeful arts* were ſtill very imperfect in his time?

As to the *Arts of Elegance*, the rank in which they ſtand in Homer (perhaps the ſame in which they occur in the natural order of diſcovery) ſeems to be this:

That *Poetry* had the precedence, the Iliad and Odyſſey ſufficiently demonſtrate; but, beſides that teſtimony, we know from the beſt accounts of barbarous and ſavage nations, that the moſt ſucceſsful efforts of genius in rude ſociety are of this kind.

If Homer's *Muſick* could be ſeparated from his Poetry, which was always ſung, and I believe generally accompanied with an inſtrument, it would claim the ſecond place: but the extraordinary effects, which are recorded of this art in the earlieſt accounts of it, belonged to the united powers of Muſick and Poetry: Indeed all inſtruction, civil and religious, was wrapt up in Melody and Verſe, and Prieſts and Lawgivers were Poets and Muſicians. This is agreeable to that rude ſtate of ſociety, which we have deſcribed, when *civilization* was addreſſed more to the *paſſions* than the *underſtanding*.

Next come the arts of *Deſign*; and firſt, *Sculpture*. Statues are mentioned in Homer, but without any admiration of, or compliment to, the ſkill of the artiſt. The ſhield of Achilles has indeed raiſed very high ideas of the Poet's knowledge, not only in Sculpture and Painting, but Philoſophy. Thoſe who have curioſity to ſee how far the antients were carried (as well as the moderns) by indulging a taſte for allegory, may conſult Euſtathius for the wild conjectures of Damo the learned daughter of Pythagoras, and of Heraclides Ponticus on this ſhield. But it was reſerved for this age to diſcover in it a full and exact idea of *Painting* in all its parts; that is to ſay, in the *invention*, the *compoſition*, and the *expreſſion*; that it is executed according to the rules of perſpective, and obſerves the *three* unities, *viz.* one principal *action*, one inſtant of *time*, and one *point of view*.

Monſieur Boivin's idea, which ſuggeſted this piece of criticiſm, is ingenious, and affords a compleat anſwer to thoſe who objected that it was impoſſible to engrave the ſubjects which are deſcribed in this beautiful epiſode within ſo narrow a compaſs as that of a Shield. But, without entering into any obſervations on this diſſertation, I muſt deny that *Painting*, as an art, was at all known to Homer. It may appear extraordinary, conſidering the preſent cloſe connection between the ſiſter arts of *Poetry* and *Painting*, that the *firſt* ſhould have acquired the higheſt perfection it has yet attained, before the *laſt* had a beginning: yet I ſee nothing in the Iliad or Odyſſey like the uſe of the pencil and colours in producing reſemblance; no hint of the Clair Obſcur, or the art of raiſing an object on a flat ſurface, and approaching it to the eye by the management of light and ſhade; nor can I find a word in the Iliad or Odyſſey to expreſs any thing like ſuch an art. I know it is generally underſtood, that the ſame word [n] ſignified originally both to *write* and *to paint*: that it had both theſe meanings in later times is true; but the Poet always applies this word to expreſs *inciſion* made by a ſharp weapon or inſtrument; nor was it ſo ſoon employed to ſignify *writing* and *painting*, which affords a preſumption that thoſe arts were not yet cultivated.

The ſame may be ſaid of *Architecture*. This *art*, which owes more to Homer's country, if he was an *Ionian*, than to any other, ſeems not to have been known in his time. I dont mean to ſay that *ornamented convenience* or even *magnificence* of a certain kind was not yet introduced into buildings, but

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[m] Anaximander invented Maps. See Strabo.

[n] γραφω.

but we ſee no marks of ſymmetry and proportion in thoſe of the Iliad and Odyſſey; the *Greek orders* were not yet invented; and Priam's *palace*,

" Rais'd on *arch'd columns* of ſtupendous fame,"

is entirely of the tranſlator's building, and borrowed from the magnificence of later ages.

Homer has been highly extolled for his knowledge of *Medicine* and *Anatomy*, particularly the latter; and his inſight into the ſtructure of the human body has been conſidered ſo nice, that he has been imagined by ſome to have wounded his Heroes with too much ſcience[k]. This has been confirmed by thoſe of the profeſſion, who, finding the Poet correct and learned in his *anatomical* terms, have not heſitated to pronounce him knowing in their art.

But had they conſidered, that thoſe were not terms of art in the Poet's days; that he had no other words to expreſs the parts of the human body, than thoſe which have been ſince conſecrated to a particular profeſſion; and if, at the ſame time they had obſerved, that all his *anatomical* knowledge does not exceed the reach of that curioſity, with which he ſeems to have ſurveyed and examined every object in nature, that fell within his obſervation, they would have ſuppreſſed that inconſiderate admiration which has been laviſhed on his *ſcience*, and have paid it, where it is due, to his *juſt conception* and *happy expreſſion* as a Painter.

In the ſame manner, the words τροπαι ηελοιο have, I think, miſled thoſe, who, collecting from that expreſſion the Poet's *aſtronomical Science*, draw from it concluſions with regard to the time when he lived. The *Tropics*, ſay they, were firſt known to Thales; but they are mentioned by Homer: therefore the Poet was poſterior to the Philoſopher.

I have already attempted to reſtore Homer's ſenſe of this expreſſion; and if, agreeable to the explanation which I have given of the paſſage, we tranſlate thoſe words the *converſions* or *turnings*, inſtead of the *tropics* of the ſun; that is, if we take a ſynonymous word from common life, inſtead of that which, though it belonged to common life in the Poet's time, has been ſince adopted by ſcience, we ſhall come nearer to the ſimplicity of his meaning; and we ſhall find that the expreſſion implies no more aſtronomical ſcience than falls to the ſhare of every peaſant, who knows that the ſun turns from us in winter, and towards us in ſummer.

When I learn from Plutarch, that Alexander admired Achilles, and envied him ſuch a Poet as Homer to ſing his praiſes, I can eaſily give credit to a circumſtance ſo much in character: but when I conſider the great improvements in the *art of war* between the time of Homer and the ſon of Philip, and yet am told that the latter conſulted the Iliad for *military knowledge*, I cannot help imputing it to his own affectation, or his Preceptor's pedantry; for Homer's battles, like thoſe of Bourguignon and other painters of that claſs, exhibit a few diſtinct figures in the fore ground; all the reſt is unintelligible confuſion.

From this ſhort view of what I conceive to have been the real ſtate of *Homer's knowledge*, I ſhall venture to offer, as matter of meer conjecture, (to more we do not pretend, without a farther inveſtigation of this ſubject) that the uſe of *Writing*, though perhaps known to Greece in Homer's time, was very little practiſed there; that all knowledge, ſacred and profane, was preſerved by *memory*, and therefore committed to *verſe* till an alphabet introduced the uſe of *proſe* in compoſition.

Nor do I propoſe this entirely without authority. [p] Euſtathius is of this opinion, as well as [p] Didymus, or whoever was the author of the leſſer Scholia; and [q] Joſephus, a reſpectable judge of this queſtion, thinks that the Iliad and Odyſſey were not committed to writing by the author. If with him we ſuppoſe that Homer left no written copy of his works, the account we find of them in antient writers becomes more probable. Plutarch, Ælian, and others agree, that Lycurgus brought them from Ionia into Greece, where they were known before only by ſcraps and detached pieces; and

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[o] See Pope's Eſſay on Homer.
[p] See Iliad. vi. 168. and vii. 175.
[q] Contra Apion. lib. i.

and Cicero tells us, that Piſiſtratus was the firſt who placed them in the order they now ſtand. It did not require a Lycurgus to bring a manuſcript of Homer from Ionia, nor a Solon, or Piſiſtratus, to arrange his poems in their proper order, if there had been an entire copy of them; but if that lawgiver collected, and wrote down, what the Ionian rhapſodiſts ſung to him, as ſome curious fragments of ancient Poetry have been collected in the Northern parts of this iſland, their reduction to order at Athens might ſtill be neceſſary; and thoſe great names we have mentioned might claim the ſame merit with regard to Homer, that the ingenious Editor of Fingal is entitled to from Oſſian.

The opinion which we have offered on this head may ſeem injurious to the Poet, as it certainly robs him of a ſuppoſed part of his character, which he has long been in poſſeſſion of, and totally overturns that advantageous idea of his Learning, which his admirers, antient and modern, have taken ſo much pains to propagate. But let us now ſee, on the other hand, whether he might not derive ſome advantages from this illiterate ſtate of things, to compenſate that loſs.

If we examine the riſe and progreſs of language, with a view to its application and uſe, we ſhall find that the ſeveral ſtages of its advancement are not equally favourable to every diſplay of genius; and that the *uſeful Artiſt* and the *Philoſopher* will find their account in certain improvements, which rather impede than forward the *Poet's* views. His buſineſs is entirely with nature; and the language, which belongs to *imperfect* arts, *ſimple* manners, and *unlettered* ſociety, beſt ſuits his purpoſe.

If then Homer found the Greek language conſiderably advanced, without the aſſiſtance of *writing* its improvements (to which, no doubt, he contributed largely) being entirely addreſſed to the *ear*, in a climate, where conception is quick, and the organs of ſpeech capable of nice articulation, it was of courſe formed to *muſick* and *poetry*, then cloſely united.

When the *ſenſe* was *catched* from the *ſound*, and not *deliberately* collected from *paper*, *ſimplicity* and *clearneſs* were more neceſſary. *Involved periods* and an *embarraſſed ſtyle* were not introduced, till *writing* became more an *art*, and *labour* ſupplied the place of *genius*. *Repetition* (for which Homer is ſo much cenſured) was not only more natural, but leſs obſervable, therefore leſs offenſive; *action*, *tone*, and *pronunciation*, were more eſſentially concerned, and all poetry was *dramatick*; it was therefore properly ranked among the *mimetick* arts, but I do not ſee how it can be now called an *imitation*, unleſs when exhibited on the ſtage.

The language which we bring into the world with us is not confined to the organs of ſpeech; but it is made up of voice, countenance, and geſture.

Had not our powers of articulation, that diſtinguiſhing mark of our ſocial conſtitution, ſuggeſted a more convenient mode of conveying our ideas, the ſimple tones of nature, with the varieties of modulation, which are now confined to the province of muſick, might have been applied to the purpoſes of common life, as we are told they are in ſome degree among the Chineſe. Speaking and ſinging would differ little, as the original Greek words, which ſignify both, ſeem to imply; the human countenance would have not only retained but improved its natural powers of expreſſion, which it is now the great buſineſs of education to ſuppreſs, and the dumb language of geſticulation would have made a very ſignificant part of converſation.

Such is the language of *Nature*, without which there could be no language of *Compact*, the *firſt* ſupplying that converſation, which was abſolutely neceſſary to form the *latter*; though afterwards falling into diſuſe, in proportion to the progreſs and improvement of what was gradually ſubſtituted in its ſtead. But, though baniſhed in great meaſure from common uſe, it retains its powers in the province of Poetry, where the moſt finiſhed efforts of artificial language are but cold and languid circumlocution, compared with that paſſionate expreſſion of nature, which, incapable of miſrepreſentation, appeals directly to our feelings, and finds the ſhorteſt road to the heart.

I will therefore venture to conclude, that it was an advantage to the Father of Poetry, that he lived before the language of *Compact* had ſo much prevailed over that of *Nature* and *Truth*.

The ſame early ſtage of artificial language may perhaps help us to another[r] reaſon for a circumſtance not leſs extraordinary in itſelf, than fortunate to letters; viz. that Homer, though the *oldeſt*, is the *cleareſt* and moſt intelligible of all antient writers; the Greek Vocabulary, though copious in his time, was not yet equivocal; ambiguity of expreſſion was little known before the birth of Science; when Philoſophy, adopting the language of common life, applied *known* Terms to *new* meanings, and introduced that confuſion and obſcurity, which continues to this day to be the great ſupport of Polemical writings.

Could Homer take a view of the various fortunes and changes his language has undergone in the ſervice of Literature, he would be ſurprized to ſee ſo many volumes of Controverſy about the ſignification of words, which conveyed to him the moſt diſtinct images of things; and to find, that terms, which, in his time, were univerſally acknowledged as the ſigns of certain external objects of ſenſe, ſhould have acquired an additional meaning, which the Philoſophy and Learning of ſo many ages have not yet been able to ſettle.

If his language had not yet acquired the refinements of a learned age, it was not only clearer and more intelligible, but leſs open to *Pedantry* and *Affectation*; for as Technical and Scientific terms were unknown, before the ſeparation of Arts, and till Science became the retired profeſſion of a few, as there was no ſchool but that of *Life*, no knowledge but that of *Nature*, and no Philoſophy but that of *Common Senſe*, ſo Homer was not expoſed to the learned jargon of a more advanced period of Greek letters, which his great admirer[s] and beſt imitator among the moderns has not eſcaped.

It may perhaps be thought, that this early ſtate of artificial language, to which we attribute ſo much of the Poet's clearneſs and unaffected ſimplicity, muſt have cramped him in the variety of his numbers: but the Greek tongue never had more *diſtinct ſounds* in proportion to its *clear ideas*, than at this period; which was therefore preciſely the time when it was fitteſt for *Poetical expreſſion*. It is true, that in its more enriched and poliſhed ſtate, it was the repoſitory of much knowledge, to which Homer was a ſtranger, but its acquiſition of *new words* was by no means in proportion to that of *new meanings*, as we have already obſerved, and the buſineſs of Literature in all its branches was carried on chiefly upon the original ſtock.

But, beſides that his language was ſufficiently copious for his purpoſes, it had other advantages more favorable to harmonious verſification, than ever fell to the lot of any other Poet. I ſhall firſt mention the Greek particles; which are to hexameter verſe, what ſmall ſtones are to a piece of maſonry, ready at hand to fill up the breaks and interſtices, and connect thoſe of a larger ſize, ſo exactly as to give a ſmooth compactneſs to the whole.

Thoſe, who judge of a verſe in the Iliad or Odyſſey by the *eye*, will be apt to think ſlightly of this obſervation; but let us remember, that Homer addreſſed himſelf to the *ear* alone, that his Poems were *ſung*, and that there is nothing in them which bears the leaſt alluſion to *writing* or *reading*. It is neceſſary to keep this in view, which will enable us to enter into the true character of his works in many reſpects, and particularly with regard to verſification, of which it would afford a much fairer trial, if, comparing it with that of Latin, Italian, French, or Engliſh compoſitions, we lay aſide all rules of Proſody, and recite paſſages out of Homer, not according to the moſt eſtabliſhed, but the moſt muſical

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[r] See above, where his *ſimplicity* and *clearneſs* of ſtyle is ſuppoſed in ſome degree owing to *writing's* not having been in uſe.

[s] Milton.

muſical pronunciation they will admit, and appeal to a good ear entirely ignorant of the languages on which the experiment is made.

Nor muſt we ſuppoſe, that Homer's *particles* were altogether condemned to this meer *expletive* duty; they contribute to a clear and diſtinct expreſſion, as well as to the flowing continuity of his verſe; and accordingly we find them much uſed by the firſt proſe writers of the beſt Greek times, who found them neceſſary to connection and perſpicuity: qualities in an author, which are ſtrangely neglected ſince thoſe inferior parts of ſpeech have been ſo much diſcarded from the faſhionable ſtyle of moſt modern languages.

But the great Poetical advantage of Homer's language is, that facility with which two or more words connect and join together, to the great improvement both of the *Sound* and *Senſe*; for it is hard to ſay, whether the ear is more filled with the *Harmony*, or the mind with the *Imagery*, of thoſe ſonorous and deſcriptive compound epithets, which have an effect in this language, unknown to any other.

While to all this we add that very extenſive Poetical licence, which ſhortens, lengthens, adds, ſuppreſſes, changes, and tranſpoſes letters and ſyllables, at the beginning, the middle, and the end of words, we muſt alſo conſider, that thoſe are not only advantages, which the Greek language poſſeſſes above all others, but which, in all probability, Homer enjoyed above all Greek Poets: for when Criticiſm took its riſe as an art, and Ariſtotle found in the Iliad and Odyſſey thoſe rules of compoſition, which the Poet drew from Nature, thoſe bounds of Poetical licence were preſcribed for *others*, which his fancy had ſuggeſted to *Himſelf*; and the *Liberties he choſe* to take, became the *Laws They* were *obliged* to follow.

Thus the *ſimplicity*, without *meanneſs* or *indelicacy*, of the Poet's language riſes out of the ſtate of his manners; there could be no mean or *indelicate expreſſion*, where no mean or *indelicate idea* was to be conveyed—there could be no *technical* terms, before the ſeparation of arts from life, and of courſe no *pedantry*—few *abſtract* ideas before the birth of *Philoſophy*;—and therefore, though there was leſs *knowledge*, there was likewiſe leſs *obſcurity*. As he could change the *form* without changing the *meaning* of his words, and vary their *ſound* without altering their *ſenſe*, he was not tempted to ſacrifice *Truth* and *Nature* to *Harmony* and *Numbers*.

Such were the advantages of language, which contributed to make Homer as *Original* in his *Expreſſion* as in his *Conception*; and (keeping to our idea of him as a Painter) as happy in his *Colouring* as his *Outline*; *ſimple* with *Dignity*; *natural* without *Indelicacy*; *informed* without *Pedantry*; the moſt *clear* and intelligible, as well as the moſt *muſical* and harmonious, of all

CONCLUSION.

IF our conjectures with regard to the two leading circumſtances of Homer's poetical life, viz. his *Country* and his *Travels*, founded upon the different ideas he ſeems to have conceived of men and things, under the various influences of thoſe diſtinct relations, are at all plauſible, conſidered *ſeparately*, they will deſerve additional credit under a *comparative* view; for as, on the one hand, the *traveller* diſcovers himſelf to be an *Ionian*, ſo, on the other, the *Ionian* proves himſelf to be a *traveller*.

But whether we view this *Ionian Traveller* at home or abroad, whether we attend him in his contemplations on the *external* beauties of the creation, or follow him into the *ſecret* receſſes of our *own hearts*, in *either* light we trace him by the moſt natural repreſentations of every characterizing circumſtance of *truth* and *reality*.

This *original mode* of compoſition, ſo eſſential to *unity* of *time*, *place*, *action*, and *character*, particularly in the *epic*, where both the narrative and deſcriptive parts of an extenſive plan, purpoſely avoiding the formality of hiſtorical and geographical order, are more expoſed to inconſiſtence, has, I hope, in ſome degree been pointed out, by the foregoing looſe and indigeſted obſervations.

I ſhall therefore venture to conclude, that the more we conſider the Poet's *age*, *country*, and *travels*, the more we diſcover that he took his *ſcenery* and *landſcape* from *nature*, his *manners* and *characters* from *life*, his *perſons* and *facts* (whether fabulous or hiſtorical) from *tradition*, and his paſſions and *ſentiments* from *experience* of the operations of the human mind in others, compared with, and corrected by, his own *feelings*.

As therefore every ſketch of this great Maſter is an exact tranſcript of what he had either *ſeen*, *heard*, or *felt*, it is not extraordinary that the ſame compoſitions, which have aſcertained, beyond competition, his *poetical* rank, ſhould not only have decided his ſuperiority as a *Geographer*, and ſecured his credit as an *Hiſtorian*, but have procured reſpect to his *Philoſophical Character*. If an unbounded veneration for his works has carried his claim ſtill higher, his amazing powers of *original* imitation furniſh the only apology I can think of for ſuch extravagance; I mean to ſay, that thoſe who found Homer and Nature the ſame, are, *ſo far*, excuſable in deriving the principles of all Science from the Iliad and Odyſſey. *Nature* includes them all: her *proportions* are juſt and invariable; whoever paints her *true*, or any part of her that is full of *action*, and applies that action to *Times*, *Places*, *Perſons*, and their *Signs*, will include thoſe *Proportions* and their *Meaſures* without intending it, almoſt without knowing it, but never without ſome perception of their *propriety* and *truth* [t].

Such is that *faithful mirrour of life*, which one of the moſt competent [u] judges of antiquity choſe to conſult for the *rule* of his *conduct* rather than the abſtract ſyſtems of *ſpeculative* writers, *unpractiſed* in the world; a compliment, which if it does great *honour* to Homer, does no leſs *juſtice* to the human character, which, making proper allowance for the Heroick State of Society, is not, I think, unfavourably repreſented by the Poet; nor do I find that any modern Chryſippus, or Crantor, has made diſcoveries which ought to depreciate ſo juſt a picture of mankind. It is flattering to receive, from a hand ſo correctly formed in Nature's ſchool, thoſe fair and pleaſing delineations of a generous ſympathy, and ſocial affection, which are interſperſed

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[t] See Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, page 314.

[u] "Qui, quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
"Plenius ac melius Chryſippo & Crantore dicit." HOR.

interſperſed even amidſt the horrors of the Iliad, but more frequently in the peaceful and hoſpitable ſcenes of the Odyſſey: here and there ſhaded, I own, with folly and vice enough to put us out of humour with the Poet and ourſelves, did he not kindly throw in a comfortable proportion of Philanthropy, which gives both warmth and reſemblance to the picture.

Yet ſo far am I from ſubſcribing to the wild pretenſions of that refined Criticiſm, which diſcovers not only the principles of all Arts and Science, but the moſt profound *ſyſtem* of *Ethics* and *Politics* in Homer, that I conſider it to have been of peculiar advantage to his *original Genius*, that he was not diverted by any *hypotheſis* from a free and impartial examination of things; and that, whatever his *plan of Inſtruction*, either Moral or Political, might have been (for to deny that he had any would be unreaſonable), his choice of *characters*, for that purpoſe, never carried him beyond *Nature* and his own experience of *life*.

To this unbiaſſed inveſtigation of the different *powers of Nature*, and the various *ſprings of action*, not as they are fancied in the *Cloſet*, tranſcribed from ſpeculative *Syſtems*, and copied from *books*, but as they were ſeen exerted in *real life*, we owe the moſt correct hiſtory of human paſſions and affections that have ever yet been exhibited under one view; ſo impartially checquered with the good and bad qualities which enter, in various proportions, into the compoſition of every character, that he has not left us one compleat pattern of moral Beauty or Deformity.

Nor ſhould we for this reaſon haſtily conclude that he was negligent of the intereſts of Humanity, or indifferent to the cauſe of Virtue; there is a certain early ſtage in the progreſs of Manners when the mind is more effectually rouzed to the duties of Society by real than by fictitious examples; and it is eaſier, perhaps wiſer, in ſuch a ſtate, to ſhew us what *we may be*, than what *we ought to be*. Such were the times that fell to Homer's lot. To blame him for the manners of thoſe times, and to find fault with the only materials he had to work upon, is highly unreaſonable.

I muſt confeſs, that he ſometimes ſeems to abandon us, to our own fancy, in the labyrinth of his great drama of human action, where ſo many different paths of life are laid open, not only to the *Judgement* but to the *Paſſions* of every age, temper, and condition; and here, no doubt, thoſe *mimetick powers* which characterize his genius carried him too far into promiſcuous imitation, where the principal, ſometimes the only, merit, is that of natural, ſtriking reſemblance; but it would be unfair to ſay that he had nothing further in view, for while he flatters our vanity in letting us find our own road through life, he has not left it too intricate for thoſe who are ſerious and diligent in ſearch of it, and if we giddily loſe ourſelves, it muſt be leſs his than our own fault.

If, after all, the learned reader finds this *method* too cloſely confined to pictures of real life for the *Moral epick Plan*, I beg he will conſider, that it was Homer's object to *pleaſe* as well as to *inſtruct*, and though he does not entirely neglect the *latter*, I muſt own he ſeems to have the *firſt* principally in view; but, as I have already ſaid, this ſhould be put to the teſt of that ſtate of Society to which it was addreſſed; when barbarous manners, not prepared to receive either plans of *Government* or ſyſtems of *Morals*, wanted the immediate ſoftenings of *Muſick* and *Poetry*; and men were to be *tamed* rather than *taught*. It has been the great object of this Eſſay to carry the Reader to the Poet's *Age* and *Country* before he forms a judgment of him. I will venture to ſay, that it has been much owing to a neglect of this conſideration, that he has been ſo often complimented with beauties he never thought of, and charged with faults he never committed.

But I have already wandered from the humble duty of bearing teſtimony, as an eye-witneſs, of the Poet's veracity. If I endeavour to reſcue him from errors, not his own, by bringing within

within the obſervation of a curſory peruſal of his works their *truth* and *conſiſtence*, as to *time*, *place*, *perſons*, and *things*; it is as a *Traveller* only that I can hope to do him that juſtice. I ſhall therefore reſume that character, obſerving the ſame method in the deſcription of the Troade, that I followed in that of Palmyra and Balbeck; where, after a plain account of the appearance of things as we found them, I left the Reader to judge of our conjectures with regard to their antient ſtate.

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THE END.